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**SOME ASPECTS OF
RELIGION AS REVEALED BY EARLY
MONUMENTS AND LITERATURE OF
THE SOUTH**

BY

K. R. SRINIVASAN

Superintendent, Department of Archaeology, Government of India



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Some Aspects of Religion as Revealed by Early Monuments and Literature of the South

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K. R. SRINIVASAN

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South India, and, particularly, the Tamil country, presents a good scope for study of the development of religion, endowed, as it is, with a large number of religious monuments and monumental sculptures amply supplemented by an indigenous literature that also affords material for the periods lacking in monuments. In fact, these two sources help us to understand the growth and evolution of some religious creeds and connected iconography. In these lectures, it will be our endeavour to study certain aspects of the subject with particular reference to Hinduism; the word is meant in its general sense which would connote the religion of the *Vēdas* and the *Āgamas*. Of course, the other creeds or religions of the Ājivakas, Jainas and Bauddhas will also lend themselves to such a study, too vast to be covered at present. At the outset it will be remembered that the *Vedic* cult and other northern creeds came in successive waves making peaceful penetration into Peninsular India. It will be interesting, briefly to note, the then extant beliefs as revealed by the earlier monuments and literature of the local people, who gradually absorbed the incoming creeds and ideas resulting ultimately in a syncretic religion that was at the same time eclectic. In the process it will be seen that much was taken from the new religions and their iconography as well as given to them. This resulted in a later repayment of South India to the North in the matter of further evolved religious forms and thought, for example, the contribution made by the great seers, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva, to mention only the most outstanding.

THE MEGALITHIC CULT

The earliest extant monuments in the South which deserve our consideration here are the megaliths, which strongly betray

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a culture and tradition peculiar to the South.¹ These megaliths which are essentially post-ex-carnation burials are different from the earlier neolithic and later post-cremation burials. Though varied in their architectural nature and methods of construction, they have, besides their characteristic association with large stones, as the very nomenclature would indicate, some essential common features, particularly, in their significance and contents, marking them out as belonging to the same culture-complex. The grave-goods include, in addition to the relatively larger or smaller parts of the carnal (i.e., fractional) remains, iron implements and weapons and pottery of a definite black-and-red type and particular shapes. They are mostly found on the sloping, uncultivable ground at the foot of the hills or rocky outcrops, forming the water-spreads of large and shallow irrigation tanks. These tanks were in turn formed by bunding up a suitable length further down the slope to impound the rain water from the hilly uplands, or brought by streams from higher elevations. On the other side of the bund, the ground was cleared and cultivated, the fields being irrigated by letting the stored up water through sluices pierced through the bund and channels leading away from them. The vast number of such monuments, which literally occur in thousands, their ubiquity, density and spacial distribution (they are found in almost all the districts of South India) all indicate a number of generations of a vast and settled agricultural people, growing irrigated crops such as rice. Their contents by themselves denote a highly advanced material culture, domestication of animals, including the horse, and great reverence for the dead.

The monuments by their very nature of construction would have involved the efforts of the entire community, since the construction of each one of them, including the transport and erection of huge slabs and boulders of stones could not have been the result of a few men's labour. In contrast, the habitations of these peoples were perhaps of humbler type, of an easily perishable nature that could not endure, so well, as their funerary structures have done. In this respect they are paralleled by the great temples of enduring stone, of a later epoch in juxtaposition with contemporary secular structures of timber and brick which have perished as a result of the onslaughts of time, weather and other natural agencies. The megalithic monuments, therefore, are

1. For a fuller account of recent megalithic studies see *Ancient India*, Nos. 2: (1946), 4: (1947-48); 5: (1949); 8: (1952); 9: (1953); and 15: (1959) and *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, (1958-59).

eloquent about the great veneration and devotion to the dead and belief in *post-mortem* existence, at least in the spirit world.

This is borne out by the ample testimony of the earlier strata of the extant *Śaṅgam* literature of the Tamils, which are at least contemporary with the later half of the megalithic phase. This literature, a compilation of earlier poems in later times without due reference to chronology and containing much that resulted from the impact of the northern peoples, their religions and creeds, echoes in its scattered descriptions these funerary practices. We find that king and nobleman, the commoner and peasant, men and women were interred in such a manner, the cult of cremation according to the *Vēdic* rites gradually replacing it, when at last such earlier practices became almost a memory, and that too much distorted as time went by. This one could see from the few references to them in later Tamil literature and late commentaries of the earlier literature, all in the first half of the second millennium after Christ.

To the megalithic monuments involving the use of stones, and the urn burials which is one of the elements of the megalithic complex, we have fairly numerous references in the *Śaṅgam* works, entire word pictures of the *iḍukāḍu* or the necropolis, where the dead were exposed and their remains buried and where the erections were both funerary and commemorative monuments. Next only to the numerous references to the *tāḷi*, (which originally seems to have signified 'burial' in general, but subsequently came to denote the pottery urn or sacrophagus commonly used as interring vessels) we have many references to the *naḍu-kal* or the 'erected stone' both sepulchral and commemorative. The *Tolkāppiyam*, a grammar belonging to the latter part of the *Śaṅgam* period has the following definition:

kāṭchi kāl̥kōḷ nīrpaḍai naḍukal
śīrttakū śīrappiṇ perumpaḍai vāḷttal
 (Tol., Poruḷ; 2:5)

The much later commentator, without a correct knowledge of the original tradition, (as he and others have done in the case of the '*tāḷi*') would interpret the first three (*kāṭchi*, *kāl̥kōḷ* and *nīrpaḍai*) as the quest for a suitable stone, the marking of the figure of the dead person on it, and its ceremonial bath. But in the context of what we have at present come to know of the material objects and the culture revealed by the megalithic monuments, *kāṭchi* probably meant the lying-in-state for some time, as is even now

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the practice, so that all the relatives and friends can assemble and do the ceremonial wailing. *Kālkōl*, likewise probably meant the exposure of the body to the elements, as would be the case in excarnation, clearly indicated by the many megalithic monuments excavated and studied. *Kāl*, according to the contemporary *Pari-pāḍal* (3:77)² meant the five elements, the compound in that case meaning (to attain) "the nature of the five elements (*iyarkai eydutaḷ*)". *Nīrpaḍai* would then refer to the ceremonial washing or purification of the few picked bones left after exposure at a much later date and its burial, and *naḍukal* the erection of the stone (megalith) over it. This was to be followed by *perumpaḍai*, the great offering, perhaps with heaps of cooked rice (*perum-cōru* in other contexts) and other food, and by *vāḷttal*—praise or adoration, perhaps with song and dance. The custom of worship and offering *perumpaḍai* or *perumcōru* for the first time, or periodically thereafter, in honour or in memory of the dead will be clear from other references in the same literature.

Peyarum piḍum eḷudi adar torum
pīli śūṭṭiya piṇṇu nilai naḍukal
 (Aham, 67:9-10; 131:10-11)
Naḍukal piṇṇiya uval iḍu paṇandalai
 (Puṇam, 314:3)

Vil ēr vāḷkkai viḷuttodaḷ maravar
val āṇ paḍukkai-k-kaḍavuḷ pēṇmār,
naḍukal pīli śūṭṭi, tuḍippaḍuttu
tōppi-k-kalḷoḍu turū-u-p-pali koḍukkum
 (Aham, 35:6-9)

il aḍu kaḷḷiṇ śil kuḍi-c-cīrūr
puḍai naḍu kaḷḷiṇ nāṭṭ pālī ūṭṭi
nal nīraṭṭi, ney-ṇ narai koḷi iya
 (Puṇam, 329:1-3)

Interestingly enough the *Piṇṇaḷa Nigaṇḍu* gives the meaning 'mudukāḍu' to the word *piṇṇiyal*. The decoration of the *naḍukal* with flower garlands and peacock plumes, with shield and lance, offerings including liquor, and worship, are referred to in all the *Saṅgam* works. The term *eḷuttu* in this and other similar contexts (e.g. *Aiṅgurunūru* 352:2; *Aham*, 67:9) perhaps refers to

2. See the commentary of Parimēlaḷakar—'Kāl' means the five *bhūtas* or elements—Dr. Swaminatha Iyer's edition, 1956, p. 25. The next two lines elaborate this idea.

working with paint and brush on the *naḍukal*, for no carved or engraved or sculptured specimens are to be seen. But in the excavations in Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, where *Prākṛit* and Sanskrit inscriptions of the early centuries of the Christian era were in vogue, such memorial stones called '*chāya-kaba*' with *Prākṛit* inscriptions of the Ikshvāku period (third century A.D.) have been unearthed. (*Vide Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1955-56, p. 24).

Most significant of all was the conception that the dead person became the *naḍukal* itself, as could be gathered from many contexts: e.g.

Nanandalai ulakam arandai tūṅga
keḍu il nal isai śūḍi,
naḍukal āyināṇ puravalāṇ enavē
 (Puram, 221: 11-13)

Ūr nani iranda pār mudir parandalai,

pal āṇ kōvalar paḍalai śūṭṭa
 F *kal āyinaiyē*
 (Puram, 265: 1-5)

The concept of the stone commemorating the dead, or even personifying the dead person, and becoming divine thereby is emphasised in all the contexts.³

Peyar maruṅgu aṛimār
Kal erindu eḷudiya nal arai marā atta
Kaḍavul ōṅgiya kādu ēśu kavalai
 (Pattup., Malaipadu, 394-96)

The *Silappadikāram* (v: line 127) refers to a temple with an erect stone as the object of worship—*neḍum kal niṇṇa maṇṇam*.

This strong tradition of associating stone with the dead, has endured for a long time among the peoples of the south, particularly the Tamils who refer to the two great events in a man's life by the significant saying "*kalyāṇam* and *kalleḍuppu*", the former referring to wedlock and the latter referring to death euphemistically, as raising of the stone memorial. This, as we

3. For other references to *naḍukal* and its worship see *Aham*, 297: 6-7; *Aiṅgurunūru*, 352:2; *Puram*, 223: 3; 232: 3-6; 260: 25-28; 263:8, 264: 1-4, 306: 3-4. For references to *perum cōru* see *Paḍirruppattu*, 30: 43-44, *Aham*, 233: 7-10; *Puram* 2: 16, 261: 2-4; *Paṭṭiṇappālai*, lines 78-79.

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would see later, was the obvious reason for the non-adoption of stone as the building material for temples and sacred edifices, and the making of images for worship, till about the 7th-8th centuries A.D., while in contrast stone was used in the architecture and sculpture of the Buddhist monuments which centred round the *stūpa* which was essentially funerary—the *dhatu-garbha*, prior to and in the early centuries of the Christian era. This would explain the paucity of standing religious edifices of the Brahmanical religion till they were excavated out of rock or built of stone in the 7th-8th centuries A.D. and after.

The same custom has continued in the erection—*kannāḍu* (as the Kuḷidikki inscription calls it), or *vīrakkal* or hero-stones, bearing inscriptions with or without sculptures and other symbols. Such hero-stones abound in many districts of Tamilnad today, including the outlying Kannada and Telugu areas, and they are locally called *Paṭṭavan-kal*, *Paṭṭavan* denoting the deified person who died as a hero, or immolated himself in observance of a vow.

Likewise, the deification of women who performed *sati*, was a growing cult, ever since the idea of *karpu* gained dominance and this *Pattiṇi* cult was a very strong one for centuries later from the time of the *Śilappadikāram*. We have the earliest references to the wife desiring burial along with her dead husband in *Puṛam* 256 where she impores the potter to make the burial urn for the dead husband big enough for her also, who like a little lizard sticking to the wheel of the chariot has been attached to her lord, in all the vicissitudes of life.

The concept of *karpu* or chastity and Arundhatī as the ideal thereof, is mentioned in the earliest of the works—*Aiṅgurūnūru* (441). *Puṛam* 246 purports to be the words of *Peuṅgō-p-peṇḍu*, the queen of Bhūta Pāṇḍiyaṇ when she committed *sati* on the funeral pyre of her husband. Material relics of such *sati* practices in the 3rd-4th centuries A.D., including inscribed and sculptured stones showing the *sati* descending into the fire pit, and other relics have been recently excavated in Nāgārjunakoṇḍa.⁴

The instance of a woman called Tīrumāvunṇi cutting off one of her breasts, standing under the *vēṅgai* (*Pterocarpus*) tree in which resided a god, in *Narriṇai* 216 and an old verse called *Pattiṇi-c-ceyyuḷ* quoted in the *Yāpparuṅgalam* (p. 351), probably

supplied the theme to the Kaṇṇaki story in the *Śilappadikāram*.⁵ The deification of the legendary Kaṇṇaki as *Pattiṇi-k-kaḍavuḷ*, the fetching of a stone for that purpose from the north and her identification with Durgā or Bhagavatī are well known. Such stones with inscriptions and sculptural representations in relief, often shown as an arm bent up at right angles at the elbow, palm facing out, are called in the Kannada districts as *tōḷ-kai-kōṭṭa-kamba*. They are generally called *Māsatikals* (*mahā-sati-kal*). Often a *vīrakal* and *māsatikal* are combined in one showing the husband and the wife, who performed *sati*, together at the top in their heavenly abode and with inscriptions below. They are found in many districts of South India, even as far south as Tenkāśi in the Tirunelvēli District up till very late mediaeval times.

The *Kandu*, perhaps a pillar or post (wooden), planted on a platform set up in the *podiyil* and believed to be the abode of, or representation of, a deity was also an aniconic object of worship in early times as will be seen from the following:

marai ēru śorinda, mātṭāṭ kandin
śurai ivar podiyil aṁ guḍi-c-cīrūr

(Aham, 287: 4-5)

Kali keḷu kaḍavuḷ kandaṁ kai viḍa-
bali kaṇ māriya pāl paḍu podiyil

(Puṛam, 52: 12-13)

Konḍi makalir, uṇṭurai mūḷki,
andi māṭṭiya nandā viḷakkiṇ
malaṛ aṇi melukkam, ēri-p-palar tola
vambala śēkkum kanduḍai-p-podiyil
parunilai neḍun tūṇ olka-t-tiṇḍi

(Paṭṭinappālai, 246-249)

The *Kalittogai* (120: 16) refers to *Kandu ādal sāṇṇavar* (the great becoming the *kandu*).

The *Kandaḷi* mentioned as an object of hymns in *Tolkāppiyam* (*Poruḷ*, ii, 33) was perhaps the same as the *Kandu*. *Kandaḷi* is also

5. Vaiyapuri Pillai: *History of Tamil Language and Literature*, (1956), pp. 146-47 and *Ilakkiya Maṇi Mālāi*, (Madras 1954), pp. 146-52,

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mentioned as one of the patron deities of the merchant guilds of the mediaeval times.

The *Maṇimēkalai* (Ch. 28: 185) describes a *Kandir-pāvai* or goddess residing (or represented) in the *Kandu*. Naccinārkiṇiyār's explanation of *kandaḷi* as the principle beyond all manifested ones which stands alone, without form and without attachment, is a very late idea echoing the evolved concept of abstract god-head of his own times, which was not so well understood in those early periods of *Śaṅgam* literature. Even to-day it is not unusual for a tree or small stone or brick or even a platform bare, or with a spear, sickle or club planted on it, to be conceived as the representation of a village god and such are to be found in every village of the Tamil country.

Curiously enough a number of memorial slabs of crudely dressed stones, found in the Tirukkōyilūr Taluk of South Arcot District, with inscriptions of the 10th-11th century A.D., but without any sculptured representations on them, are called *tari* in their inscriptions. *Tari* like *Kandu* would mean an upright pillar or post. These stones are commemorative of certain vows called *paraṇi* or *nōṇbu*, as stated in the same inscriptions, fulfilled by women whose names are also mentioned.⁶

Another object of worship by the fisher-folk on the sea shore was the toothed rostrum of the gravid shark or saw-fish planted on the sandy beach adorned with flowers and worshipped with offering, song and dance. Such a worship is described in the *Paṭṭiṇap-pālai* (83-89).

nilavu aḍainda iruḷ pōla
valai uṇaṅgum maṇal munṛil;
vīl-t-iḷlai-tāṭ tāḷnda
veṇ kūṭṭāḷattu-t-taṇ pūṇ kōdaiyar
śinai-c-curavin kōḍu naṭṭu
maṇai-c-cērttiya val aṇaṅgiṇāṇ

Besides these were the gods and spirits residing in trees, hills, rivers, tanks, and in the cross-roads as local guardians. Many of the trees were totem gods, and this tradition continued in later times, particularly in the Śaivite temples as the *sthalavṛksha*, eg. *Tillai*, *Vaṇṇi* etc.

6. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy, 1938, Part II, para. 81.*

In the time of the *Maṇmēkalai*, when cremation became more common, the necropolis as described in the story of the *Śakkara-vāḷakōṭṭam*, contained brick-built memorial shrines, for the saints (*aruntavar*), kings, *satis*, who gave up their lives along with their husbands, and for other people, with their various *varṇas* and sexes indicated, raised in their honour by their relatives (*Maṇi*, VI, 54-59). These were found along with the temple of Durgā and the megalithic monuments (*Nirai-kal-terri*) and *kandus* or posts representing deities to which *balis* (offerings) were made.

ADVENT OF STONE FOR SACRED PURPOSES

When Pallava Mahēndravarmaṇ I excavated his first cave temple without the use of the traditional brick, timber, mortar and metal in Maṇḍagappaṭṭu for the Trimūrti (Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva) as he proclaims in his inscription there, he calls himself a *vichitra-chitta*. He could claim to be so (or was called so) for more than one reason. He was the first to create such permanent abodes of god in hard and enduring stone in a land of brick-and-timber temples. Secondly, even at that, he was the first to excavate into hard rocks like granite, while his contemporaries and rivals in war and art, the Chāḷukyas, did create such temples in the softer sandstone, following the tradition of the Mauryas and the Guptas and of the Āndhras and Ikshvākus, who instead of sandstone chose the softer trap rocks of Western India and the Palnāḍ lime-stone of the east coast of Āndhra for their work. Mahēndra's cave temples were really an achievement when viewed against that background, since for nearly a thousand years after Aśoka and Daśaratha made their first and last excavations of the caves in the granite of Barābar and Nāgārjuni hills near Gaya and changed over to the softer sandstone for the pillars, sculptures and other erections, thus starting a long tradition of work on softer stones.

The hard nature of the material, the difficulty involved and time taken in working it, limited, not only the size of Mahēndra's cave temples, but also their sculptures and embellishments, as compared with the contemporary work of the Chāḷukyas and the earlier dynasties who could work with greater ease on the softer stones, resulting in greater quantity of sculptural and other embellishment. Subsequently Mahēndra excavated cave temples dedicated solely either to Viṣṇu, as at Mahēndravāḍi and Māmaṇḍūr (first cave temple) or to Śiva as at Vallam (upper cave), Daḷavāṇūr, Śiyamaṅgalam and Tiruchirāpaḷli (upper cave). The

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caves at Pallāvaram, Māmaṇḍūr (second cave) etc., were dedicated to more than one god, having three or five shrine cells.

The simple type of cave temple continued to be excavated by the successors of Mahēndra and after some time by the contemporary Pāṇḍyas, the Adigaimāns and Muttaraiyars in their respective territories, in hard granite. Māmalla by himself made innovations and started another series of cave temples with more ornate facades and pillars and also the monolithic *vimānas* popularly called *rathas*, all confined to Mahābalipuram.

It was Paramēśvaravarman I who made the first experiment at Kūram, and Tirukkaḷukunṇam to erect structural temples, which were real constructions, out of slabs of granite. Following him Rājasimha perfected the technique and erected the earliest structural temples extant as such, as in Mahābalipuram, Kāñchī and Panamalai. While the cave temples imitated the interior aspects of contemporary brick and timber structural temples, the *rathas* and structural temples were stone reproductions of both the exterior and interior aspects of brick and timber temples even to the minutest detail.

A close scrutiny of the earlier cave temples and *rathas* reveals that though Mahēndra and Māmalla deviated from the traditional materials of construction, they perhaps could not do so in respect of the principal image consecrated. In the earlier and contemporary temples, the principal object of worship consecrated was a painting on the wall or one fixed to the wall, or picked out or moulded in stucco and painted, or of wood, carved and appropriately painted. Among the many references in the *Śaṅgam* and post-*Śaṅgam* works, we can quote the following in support of this fact.

*Ittikai nedum śuvar viṭṭam vīṇḍeṇa
maṇi-p-purā-t-turanda maraṇ śōr māḍattu
eḷudu aṇi kaḍavuḷ*

(*Aham*, 167: 13-15)

*. kēḷ koḷa-k
kāḷpuṇaindu iyarriya vaṇappu amai nōṇ śuvar-p-
pāvaियum bali eṇa-p-perā- a;*

(*Aham*, 369: 6-8)

*kayaṇ kaṇḍanna vayanḡuḍai nagarattu,
śembu iyanṇaṇṇa seṇ śuvar puṇaindu*

(*Pattupāṭṭu*, *Maduraik.*, 11: 484-85)

avar avar tām tām arindavāru ētti
ivar ivar em perumāṇ enru, šuvar mišai-c-
cārttiyum vaittum toluvar: ulaku aḷanda
mūrti uruvē mudal.

(*Divya Prabandham*—2095—Poygai Ālvār—*Iyarpā*,
 verse 14).

The *Avanti-Sundarī-Kathā-Sāra*⁷ narrates how the queen of Rājahamsa offered worship to Guha in the cave temple and saw the wall painting (*bhitti citra*) of Guha playing beside his parents (evidently the Sōmaskanda panel), and a son was born to her, as a result of her wish and prayer.

Even today many of the great temples have their principal images in worship in the *garbhagṛiha* made of stucco eg. the Raṅganātha in Śrīraṅgam and the Anantapadmanābha in Tri-vandrum, or of wood eg. in the Viṣṇu temple at Tirukkōyilūr, and the earlier image of Attivaradar of the Varadarājaperumāḷ temple in Kāñchī, which is kept inside the tank to be taken out periodically. Mahēndra and Māmalla could not, therefore, make the principal images in the sanctum of their temples, in stone, even as bas-reliefs on the wall. As such, all these cave temples have empty shrines with tell-tale traces of the original painted image on the wall, or with small platforms for brick and stucco images against the hind wall, or with square or rectangular depressions on the hind wall of the sanctum for the insertion of carved wooden plaques.

The recent finds in the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa excavations of the remains of the brick temple of *Aṣṭabhujaśvāmi* of about the 3rd-4th century A.D., and of a lime stone slab with a large slot for the insertion of the base of a wooden image,⁸ with an inscription in front of the slot, further confirm this. The inscription refers to the consecration of *Aṣṭabhujaśvāmi* (eight armed Viṣṇu) made of *audumbara* wood (fig-wood), a material described in all *Silpa* and *Āgama* literature as the most suitable for making images. Even the later *Āgama* and *Silpa* texts traditionally prescribe wood as the first material, then others, such as *kaḍi śarkarā* (mortar) or paint (*citra*) and metal, and, last of all, stone. Even the stone images were to be plastered and painted appropriately, a thing to

7. Ed. Harihara Sastri—Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Madras (1957); III, vv. 37-38.

8. *Indian Archaeology*—A Review, 1953-59, p. 8.

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be seen in many temples even today. It was only in the time of Paramēśvaravarman I, that we see bas-reliefs in stone carved on the back walls of the sanctum in the cave temples and *rathas*, he completed or made, and such reliefs are to be found in the structural temples of Rājasimha also. The contemporary Pāṇḍyas, and kings of other dynasties, who excavated cave temples, dating after the time of Paramēśvara I (670-700 A.D.) had bas-reliefs of the concerned deities, carved on the back walls of the sanctum of their cave temples or had rock-cut *lingas*. The next step was the installation of slabs containing bas-reliefs or high reliefs of the deities at the centre of the floor of the sanctum to be followed later by sculptures in round, of stone.

The tradition of associating stone with the funeral was so strong that all this could not happen even at the outset, and at least a section of the people had to reconcile themselves to the use, for sacred purposes, of the prohibited material that was more instinctively associated with the funeral. Even so the contemporary leaders of religious thought, the early Nāyaṇmārs, and the Ālvārs, the exponents of the strong *bhakti* movement, who made it a point to travel widely and visit every shrine and sing their hymns, have by-passed these innovations. Not one of the rock-cut cave temples, nor even the great contemporary achievements in sculpture and architecture, has been referred to by them in any of the thousands of hymns they have sung. On the other hand they have sung about what would appear to be small and architecturally insignificant temples, and even gods in humbler habitations. Their orthodoxy appears so strong. It is only one of the Ālvārs, viz., Tirumaṅgai, that refers to the Paramēccura-viṇṇagaram, built by the Pallava—identified as the stone temple in Kāñchī, now called the Vaikuṇṭha-p-perumāl, built by Nandivarman Pallavamalla. Otherwise these stone temples had to wait till the time of the Chōlas, to become important by their own additions of accessory structures to existing ones and also by their building stone temples in a number of places, or re-building in stone many of the earlier brick and timber structures hallowed by the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava saints. Side by side the custom of building memorial shrines, referred to earlier in the *Maṇimēkalai*, in stone became also common in later Pallava and early Chōla times. Such were called *Pallippaḍai*.⁹ The shrines in a line outside the Kailāsanātha tem-

9. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 429 of 1902; 230 of 1903; and 271 of 1927; *South Indian Inscriptions*, III, 16.

ple, Kāñcī, at least some of them, *eg.* the Nityavinītesvara, seem to be such memorial shrines. This is reminiscent of the *Dēvarāja* cult, which had a much wider development in the Far East.

It was then, over this strong substratum of a cult of the worship of the great dead, symbolised by lithic monuments, intermixed with the animistic and shamanistic concepts, that the four great creeds of the north *viz.*, those of the *Vēdic* Hindus, Jains, the Ajīvakas and the Bauddhas were superimposed. They actively penetrated in waves starting from a time three or four centuries, if not earlier, before the commencement of the Christian era. This gave a spurt not only to the rise and growth of literature, but also gradually influenced local religion and beliefs, the incoming faiths getting themselves transformed in the process by their contact with the existing culture which by all evidences, literary and material, was an advanced one. It was a process not only of introduction but also of transformation by assimilation and identification with the local gods and beliefs.

THE EARLY RELIGIOUS CULTS

Taking into consideration the Hindu impact, we find in the earlier strata of the *Śaṅgam* literature, belonging to the first half of the first millennium A.D., references to *Vēdic* ideas, customs and sacrifices and to the Hindu gods in their new habitations, forms and attributes mixed with much that was indigenous. In the absence of any contemporary iconographic representations, plastic or graphic, we have to seek for information only from the literary sources. The syncretic forms of Māyōṇ and Vāliyōṇ or Nāgar, the local forms of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Śevvēḷ or Neḍuvēḷ, the Murugaṇ of the Tamils corresponding to Kārttikēya-Skanda-Vaiśākha-Subrahmaṇya, the three-eyed Śiva, Koravai or Aiyai, or Kāḍurai Kaḍavuḷ also called Kāṇ-amar-śelvi, the aspect of Durgā, have been evolved. Vēndaṇ or the lord of the celestials, *i.e.*, Indra, and Varuṇa, Brahmā the creator, and Ādisēsha, are also referred to.

VISHNU

The *Bhāgavata* cult of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, or Vāsudēva-Saṅkarshaṇa was popular as in contemporary north India. They are described respectively as dark and white complexioned. Māyōṇ's flag was the kite and his symbol or weapon the *nēmi* or discus, while Vāliyōṇ's was the palmyra and his weapon the *nāññiḷ* or *mēḷi*, the plough. (*Puṛaṇ*, 46 and 58). In *Puṛaṇ* 58 Māyōṇ

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is described as Veyyōṇ (the Sun god) that bears the kite (*garuḍa*) flag, suggesting a synthesis of Sūrya and Viṣṇu. The still earlier *Narriṇai* (32: 1-2) uses in a simile the contrasting colours of Māyōṇ and Vāliyōṇ.

kaḍal vaḷar puri vaḷai puraiyum mēni,
aḍal ven nāñjil, paṇai-k-koḍiyōṇum;
mannuru tirumaṇi puraiyum mēni,
viṇ-uyar-putḱoḍi, viral veyyōṇum

(*Puram*, 56: 3-6).

pāl nira uruvin paṇai-k-koḍiyōṇum
nāl nira uruvin nēmiyōṇum

(*Puram*, 58: 14-15)

māyōṇ aṇṇa māl varai-k-kavā aṇ
vāliyōṇ aṇṇa vaṇṇangu veḷ aruvi

(*Narriṇai*, 32: 1-2)

Viṣṇu as Anantaśāyi is described in the later *Pattuppāṭṭu* collection, in which the reclining deity is mentioned in the *Perumbānārruppaḍai* (lines 371-73), and in the description of Kāñcī (lines 492-405) the city is likened to the lotus that bears Brahmā of the four faces and who rose out of the navel of Neḍiyōṇ (Viṣṇu). Again as Trivikrama and the one who bears *Tiru* (*Śrī*) in his chest, he is mentioned in the same poem (lines 29-31). The story of Viṣṇu coming as a dwarf and subsequently assuming the Trivikrama form to measure the earth is referred to in *Maṇimēkalai* (xix: 51-52) and the discomfiture of Bali in *Tirukkural* (61:10). The *Mullaippāṭṭu* (lines 1-3) of the *Pattupāṭṭu* collection refers to Viṣṇu as the holder of the conch and discus who also rose up in stature as Trivikrama.

The *Paripāḍal*, a post-Saṅgam collection, dating between the 5th and 7th centuries A.D., which had eight long poems on Viṣṇu, of which six complete ones and stray verses of the rest are extant, shows a full development of the forms and attributes of Viṣṇu and his different iconic forms such as Varāha, Trivikrama, Nara-simha, Kṛishṇa, in his Viśvarūpa form as Virāṭpuruṣa, and also in the four *vyūha* forms—Vāsudēva, Saṁkarshaṇa, Kāma or Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

Seṇgaṭ Kāri! Karuṁ kaṇ vellai!
Poṇkaṭpaccai! Painṅaṇ mā-al!

(*Paripāḍal*, 3: 81-82)

In another context, (4: 36-42) it mentions their flags as *Palmyra*, *Plough*, *Elephant* and *Garuḍa*. Significantly enough the elephant, as one of the flags is substituted for the usual *Makara* flag of Pradyumna. *Paripāḍal* (15) refers to *Tirumāliṟuṅkuṇṇam* as the abode of both Balarāma and Kṛishṇa.

The *Śilappadikāram* mentions in many contexts the temples dedicated to Māyōṇ and Vāliyōṇ

Vāl vaḷar mēṇi Vāliyōṇ Kōyilum
Nīla mēṇi Neḍiyōṇ Kōyilum

(v: lines 171-172)

Pukar vellai nāgar taṁ kōṭṭam

(ix: line 10)

Mēḷi valaṇ uyartta vellai nagaramum

(xiv: line 9)

The shrines in the three contexts are called *kōṭṭam*, *kōyil* and *nagaram*.¹⁰

A Pallava Grantha inscription (650-700 A.D.) in florid script in the Ādivarāha cave temple at Māmallalpuam enumerates, for the first time, the ten *avatārs* or incarnations of Viṣṇu as follows:

Matsyaḥ—Kūrmō—Varāhaścha—Nārasimhaś cha Vāmanaḥ |
Rāmō Rāmaścha Rāmaścha Buddhaḥ Kalki cha tē daśaḥ ||

10. The term *kōyil* (*kō-ūl*) used to denote an abode of a god, as against its real connotation of a king's abode or palace (as obtains in Malayalam even today) indicates clearly the late character of *Śilappadikāram*. Such a term is unusual even in the early lithic inscriptions of the 7th-10th centuries A.D. i.e., in the time of the Pallavas and Pāṇḍyas of that period but found frequently in the *Tēvāram* and *Prabandham*. The term *kōyil* referring to a temple occurs only rarely, in three cases, for the first time, viz., in the Pallava inscription at Śīrāmbākkam (*Epigraphia Indica* xxxii, p. 290) of the first year of Paramēśvaravarman I (670-700), in the sixth year of Māraṇjaḍaiyan in *Tirupparankuṇṇam* (773 A.D.) and in the recently discovered Pāṇḍya inscription in the cave temple at Malaiyaḍikkurichi of seventeenth year of Māraṇ Śēndan (8th-9th centuries A. D.) where the respective cave temples are called *Kō-ūl* and *Karṇirukkōyil* (*Kal-tiru-k-kōyil*). The term *Kōṭṭam* in the latter *Śilpa* works denotes a rectangular shrine with a wagon top or *śāla* roof which is invariably a feature of *dēvī* shrines. *Nagaram* is significant. The term also occurs in the sense of a temple in *Pattup-pāṭṭu* (*Maduraikkāñji*, line 484) and *Paripāḍal*—(*Tirappu*—lines 49, 59, and 60)

Significantly enough Kṛṣṇa is omitted but in his place Buddha is mentioned as the ninth incarnation. Paraśurāma is referred to as *maṇ maruṅgarutta maḷuvā neḍiyōṇ* in *Maṇimēkalai* (22:25) and as *maḷuvālan maṇṇar maruṅgaruttu māl*, in the *Tolkāppiyam* (*Purat: Sutra* 13). The *Śilappadikāram* (xi: 35-51) describes the recumbent form of Viṣṇu on the serpent couch in Śīraṅgam and the standing form of Viṣṇu in Tiruvēṅgaḍam, again pointing out to its late date.

Of the three, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā, the last is not mentioned in the earlier texts as such, though Durgā, who is associated in one of her aspects with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as Ēkānamśa or Subhadrā, is mentioned as the sister of Māyōṇ, (*Māl-avar-k-ku-iḷangilai*) in *Śilappadikāram* (xii: line 68). But on the other hand Māyōṇ is associated with Piñṇai or Nappiñṇai or Napiñṇai, one of the *āychchiyar* (*gōpis*) as his favourite *dēvi*. Vāliyōṇ or Vellai Nāgar (Balarāma), Māyōṇ (Vāsudēva) and Nappiñṇai (associated with Nīlā-dēvi in later times) are impersonated in the dance called *Āychchiyar Kuravai*, which is the theme of Chapter xvii of *Śilappadikāram*. The Kṛṣṇa-Nappiñṇai cult is referred to profusely in *Nālāyira-Prabandham*, eg. by Āṇḍāl in her *Tiruppāvai* (verse 19, line 19), assignable to the second half of the 9th century A.D. This combination is also referred to by Sundarar in the *Tēvāram* (7875: 7th *Tirumurai*, 63rd decad, v. 7, line 1) as "*Pinṇai nambum puyattān Neḍumāl*". Kṛṣṇa is said to have married Nappiñṇai in the traditional manner after a bull baiting contest (*kol-ēru-taḷuvudal*) in which he embraced and defeated seven bulls, eg. *Prabandham*, 3168; *Tiruvāymoli*, 3, 5: v. 4—has "*vambu aviḷ Kōdai poruṭṭā, māl viḍai*

and it perhaps refers to the type of a temple of the *nāgara* class of the *Śilpa* texts denoting a square *vimāna* with a four-sided domical roof.

Kayam kaṇḍaṇṇa vayaṅguḍai nagarattu
(*Maduraik*, line 484)

Iru kēḷ utti aṇinda eruttiṇ
varai kēḷu śelvaṇ nagar

(*Paripāḍal-Tiraṭṭu*, lines 48-49)

Pūmuḍi nāgar nāgar

(*ibid.*, line 59)

Kuḷavāiy amarndāṇ nagar

(*ibid.*, line 63).

The word 'Nagaram' is used in the sense of a temple, in an Eastern Chāḷukya copper-plate of Kali Viṣṇuvardhana (847-49 A.D.): No. 1 of 1953-54, *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*, 1953-54, p. 2, para 2.

ēlum aḍartta Sempavaḷa-t-tiralvāyan". The fight with the seven bulls is also referred to by Appar in *Tēvāram* (4638: 4th *Tirumurai*, 49th *padikam*, v. 5, line 1) as "*Ēruḍan ēlu-aḍarndāṇ*".

This peculiar Tamil tradition was strong even in the time of the *Jīvakachintāmaṇi*, assignable to the first half of the 10th century A.D. Incidentally this also brings the date of the *Silappadikāram* nearer to *Āṇḍāl* and *Chintāmaṇi*. This association of Balarāma, Kṛishṇa and Nappiṇṇai, is reflected in the only sculpture of the kind in Māmallapuram, viz., the famous Gōvardhana scene, in the so called Kṛishṇa maṇḍapa. This is a large rock relief depicting the story of Kṛishṇa holding up the hill Gōvardhana as an umbrella, to protect his community of cowherds along with their kine, from the wrath of Indra. Under this shelter are shown cowherds, their women and children, with their cattle and other belongings, all crowding into the shelter. On the right half of the panel stands Balarāma, leaning affectionately over the shoulders of a nearby cowherd, and next to him stands Kṛishṇa with a woman, marked out from the rest by her costume and pose and leaning on an attendant lady nearby. Her importance would clearly make her out as Nappiṇṇai, the beloved of Kṛishṇa. But for this, and another sculpture relating to Kāliyamardana, on one of the storeys of the Dharmarāja ratha, *Bhāgavata* scenes relating to the Kṛishṇa episodes are absent in the Pallava and contemporary rock-cut architecture of the Tamil country.

Of the *Rāmāyāṇa*, not even one scene or episode is represented till we come to the early Chōḷa temples of 9th-10th centuries A.D. eg. Nāgēśvara (Kumbakōṇam), Virattānēśvara (Kaṇḍiyūr) and the Śiva temple in Puñjai. The *Śaṅgam* classics have references to these and the hymns of the Ālvārs and the Nāyanmārs are replete with these. The *Mahābhārata* epic, too, seems to have been rendered into Tamil during this period. The author of this epic Bhāratam-pāḍiya Perundēvanār, (c. 10th century A.D.) has contributed the invocatory verses in praise of Śiva, Murugaṇ and Tirumāl to the different *Śaṅgam* collections. The first verses of the imprecation at the beginning of *Kuruntokai* and *Narriṇai*, seem almost like a translation of a *ślōka* in *Vishṇu Sahasranāma*. This absence of sculptures relating to these epics and *purāṇas* in the earlier monuments is in marked contrast to what obtains in the contemporary Chālukyan and Rāshtrakūṭa monuments in Bādāmi, Paṭṭadakkaḷ and Ellōra and in South-East Asia, eg. the temple at Prāmbanām.

The principal forms of Viṣṇu, in accordance with the iconographic concepts described in the *Śaṅgam* literature and the devotional literature of the Ālvārs, are found reproduced in sculpture in the cave, monolithic and structural temples of the Pallavas, and the cave and monolithic temples of the Pāṇḍyas, Muttaraiyars and Adigamāṇs. They are the standing, seated and reclining forms of Viṣṇu and his other forms as Varāha, Narasimha, Trivikrama, and Harihara. The standing form is found in the Trimūrti cave temple at Māmallapuram, in the cave temple in Kīlmāvilaṅgai and in one of the shrines of the lower cave temple in Tiruchirāpaḷli to mention a few. It occurs also as exterior sculptures on the walls of the early temples, in many cases, *eg.* in the Dharmarāja ratha and Ādivarāha cave temple in Māmallapuram and in the cave temples in Tirumalaipuram and Śevilippaṭṭi and on the walls of the structural Vaikuṇṭhaperumāl temple in Kāñchi. The seated forms are fewer and occur in the eastern sanctum dedicated to Viṣṇu in the cave temple in Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam, in the central shrine in Kūram Viṣṇu temple (late Pallava), in the *maṇḍapa* of the Narasimha cave in Nāmakkal, in one of the three panels to the east of the facade of the Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam cave temple and on the walls of the Vaikuṇṭhapperumāl in Kāñchi. The reclining forms occupying the principal shrines are many, *eg.*, the shrine between the two Śiva temples in the Shore temple complex at Māmallapuram, in the cave temples in Śiṅgavaram, Malaiyaḍippaṭṭi, Tirumeyyam and Tiruttaṅgāl. The classic example is the one on the wall of the *maṇḍapa* of the Mahishāmardinī cave temple, Māmallapuram.

Varāha, the principal deity in the Ādivarāha cave temple, even to-day, is a stucco image. This form in stone is found again in the *maṇḍapa* of the Varāha cave temple in the same place, on the east of the facade of the Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam cave temple and in the Raṅganātha cave in Nāmakkal. Narasimha was the principal deity in the Mahēndravāḍi cave temple and perhaps also of the Māmaṇḍūr cave temple I, and is in stone in the cave temple in Śiṅgapperumāl Kōil, as also in the cave temple in Anamalai (770 A.D.) and in the Narasimha cave temple, Nāmakkal. He is shown again on the panel to the east of the facade of the Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam cave temple.

Trivikrama is to be found in the Varāha and Ādivarāha cave temple *maṇḍapas* in Māmallapuram and in the *maṇḍapas* of both the cave temples in Nāmakkal. Varāha, Narasimha and Trivikrama,

besides being some of the earliest *avatāra* concepts, seem to have had an additional significance in connection with the imperial or *chakravarti* concept, for, Varāha would symbolise the redemption of the kingdom from evil, Narasimha, power and might and Tri-vikrama, conquest of other domains; as would be clear from the similes in royal *praśastis*. As such these have been the favourites of many great dynasties, e.g. the Guptas, Chālukyas and Pallavas. The concept of Harihara, described by the early Ālvārs and Nāyanmārs, is amply exemplified in many places, eg., in the Dhar-marāja ratha and Ādivarāha cave temple, Māmallapuram, in Nāmakkal and in other places.

SURYA

That the sun was an object of worship from the early times is to be inferred from such references to its power and worship in the earlier *Saṅgam*, and post-*Saṅgam* classics.

munṇīr mīmīśai-p-palar toḷa-t-tōṇṇi
ēmura vīlaṅgiya śuḍarīṇum

(*Narṇṇai*: 283: 6-7)

tayaṅgu tirai-p-peruṅkaḍal, ulaku toḷa-t-tōṇṇi
vayaṅgu kadir virinda, urukeḷu maṇḍilam

(*Aham*: 263: 1-2)

aruṇ tiral kaḍavuḷ śellūr kuṇā adu
peruṇ kaḍal mūḷkiṇṇu āki

(*Aham*: 90: 9-10)

Nāyīru pōrrudum, Nāyīru pōrrudum

(*Śilappadikāram*: 1: 4-6)

ulaku-toḷu-maṇḍilam

(*ibid.* 14: 5)

ulakam uvappa valaṅ ēṇṇu tiri taru
palar pukaḷ Nāyīru.....

(*Pattuppāṭṭu-Tirumuruḡu*: 1-2)

Sculptures of Sūrya are to be found in the early Pallava monuments, eg., in the eastern face of the second *tala* of the Dhar-marāja ratha, Māmallapuram and further south in the lower rock-cut cave in Tiruchirāpaḷḷi. The Kāvērīpākkam Sūrya (Madras Museum) is an example of the late Pallava period. A sculpture of

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Sūrya, originally belonging to one of the *parivāra* shrines, of the close of the Pallava period (903 A.D.) is found inside the temple of Viraṭṭānēśvara at Tiruttani, Chingleput District. His image is often found on the wall niches of structural temples, and in separate shrines forming the *ashṭaparivāra* of early Chōla temples as in Tirukkattalai Sundarēśvara, and also in Tirupparāytturai as stated by its inscription.¹¹ The image of Sūryadēva here is mentioned again in other Parakēsari (early Chōla) inscriptions (177 of 1907).¹² Another image in Tirumudukunṇam (Vṛiddhāchalam) of the time of Parakēsari is mentioned in another inscription.¹³ A temple for Sūrya called Śri Gaṇḍarāditta-Ādittagaram was constructed in the 40th year of Parāntaka I Chōla in Jambai, perhaps as one of the *parivāra* shrines in Nagarīśvaram temple there.¹⁴

The Sūrya images of South India, in contrast to the earlier Sūrya images of Northern India lack the *udīcyavēsha*, consisting of close fitting garment over the body and top boots of the legs, and are shown bare-footed.

A new feature of the *Tāntric* worship of Sūrya is found introduced in the time of Rājendra Chōla I, for in his Gaṅgaikoṇḍa-chōlapuram temple is seen a *Sūrya yantra*, which is in the form of a blooming lotus or *padma* on a square pedestal, with wheels on either side and drawn by seven horses in front. The plinth of the temple, excavated recently, to the north of the main *vimāna* was evidently a Sūrya temple, where this *yantra*, now located in the *mahāmaṇḍapa* of the main temple, was perhaps originally installed. A Gahadavāla inscription with an incomplete Gahadavāla *praśasti*, dated in the 41st year of Kulōttuṅga Chōla I (1111 A.D.) is an indication of the emphasis given to Sūrya worship in the Tamil country by the association of the Gahadavāla kings with the Chōla capital.¹⁵ This impetus is marked by the construction of the great Sun temple called Kulōttuṅga Chōla Mārtāṇḍālaya by Kulōttuṅga I in Sūryanār Kōvil in the Tanjore District, where the god is called Kulōttuṅga Chōla Mārtāṇḍa.¹⁶

11. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1903, No. 258. *South Indian Inscriptions*, VIII, 560.

12. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1907, No. 177.

13. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1908, No. 56.

14. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1937-38, Nos. 443, 442 and 441.

15. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1908, No. 29, Part II, 58-60.

16. *ibid.*, 1927, Nos. 229 and 231.

In this connection it will be remembered that the worship and cult of Sūrya was reestablished in proper form by Śaṅkara in the beginning of the 9th century A.D.

DEVI CULTS

The concept of Durgā as the dweller in the hilly areas is first indicated in her original role as *Korravai* or *Verrimaḍantai* (Goddess of Victory) with her abode in the *Vākai* tree in *Padirruppattu* (66) and by *Kuruntokai* (218: 1) where she is called *Śūli* the wielder of the *Śūla* (trident) to whom vows are made.

“*viḍar-mukai-aḍukkattu-viral kelu śūlikku*
kaḍaṇum pūṇām

(*Kuruntokai*: 218: 1)

And again as *Kāṇ-amar-śelvi*, the great goddess, the denizen of the forest, she is described in *Ahanānūru* (345: 3-7). The *Kāḍurai Kaḍavul* of *Porunarārruppaḍai* (line 52) in the *Pattuppāṭṭu* collection, as also the *Tunaṅgaiyañ-celvi* of *Perumbāṇ-ārruppaḍai* (line 459) of the same collection refer to the same goddess, the latter referring to her as one who dances the *tunaṅgai* dance. The *Kalittokai* (89: 8) and *Tolkāppiyam* (*Meyy.*, *Sūtra* 12, *Pēr.*) echo the same sense of the she-devils presuming to teach one or two steps or poses (*naḍi*) in dancing to the great goddess. The *Maṇi-mēkalai* (Ch. vi: 50-53) in the story of the *Śakkravāla-k-kōṭṭam*, refers to the temple (*kōṭṭam*) of *Kāḍamar-Śelvi* (Durgā or *Chaṇḍikā*) with the sacrificial altar in its front yard and surrounded by tall posts with the severed heads suspended from them.

ulaiyā-uḷḷamōḍu-uyir-k-kaḍan-iruttōr
talai tūngu neḍumaram tāḷndu puram currip-
pḍikai-ōṅgiya perumbali munṇir-k
Kāḍamar śelvi kaḷi perum kōṭṭamum

(*Maṇi*. vi: 50-53)

The same *Kāḍamarśelvi* occurs in another context in *Maṇi-mēkalai* (xviii: 115). She is designated as the goddess of war and again as the ancient goddess (*Paḷaiyōl*) in *Tirumurugārruppaḍai* (lines 258-59), a much later inclusion forming the invocatory poem of the *Pattuppāṭṭu* collection. The *Paripāḍal* collection seems to have had a poem on *Kāḍukāl* according to the later commentaries of *Iraiyānār* (*Ahapporuḷ Sūtra* 1) and that of *Pēraśiriyar* (on *Poruḷadikāram*, *Seyyul*, *Sūtra* 149) of the *Tolkāppiyam*.

22 RELIGION AS REVEALED BY EARLY MONUMENTS

Kāḍukaḷ is said to be the corruption of *Kāḍukilāl*, which again in the commentary of *Takkayāgapparaṇi* (54-urai) is given as *Kāṇa-nāḍi* or *Vaṇa-Durgā*. Even in the *Tēvāram* times she is denoted as *Kāḍukāl*. The *Maṇimēkalai* echoes in another context (xx: 115-116) the *Vindhyāvāsini* concept of Durgā,

*andaram-selvōr andari irunda
vinda mālvarai mīmīśai-p-pōkār
(Maṇi.: xx: 115-116)*

The *Āgama* and *Śilpa* texts—the *Vaikhānasa-Āgama* for example, assign to the Durgā figure a place in the *dēvakōshṭha* outside the northern wall of the *ardhamanḍapa* of a Śaiva temple as *Vindhyāvāsini*, a feature that becomes common from the close of the 8th century onwards, the corresponding southern niche containing Gaṇapati. This form of standing Durgā, often on the head of a buffalo (*Mahisha*), is described in *Śilappadikāram* (xx, 34-35) as

*aḍarttu-elū-kurudi aḍaṅgā-p-paṣum-tuṇi-p
piḍar-t-talai-p-pīṭam-ēriya maḍakkkoḍi
verrivēl taḍakkai-k-korṟavai,*

The *Śilappadikāram* in the *Vēṭṭuvavari* (Ch. xii) gives a fuller concept both of the cult and iconography of Durgā or *Korṟavai*¹⁷ in a vivid manner. She is described as having a body, the colour (dark blue) of which resembles that of a flower of the *Kāyā* (*Memecylon edule*), with lips red like the coral, teeth white and the neck dark, with a third eye on the crescent like forehead, holding the discus and conch, sword and *śūla* (spear) and the bow which was the *mēru* (*neḍumalai*) strung with the snake *Vāsuki* as its *ṇāṇ*, wearing the skin of a tiger and a belt (*mēkalai*) of lion's skin, a *kaḷal* (hero's calf-band) on one leg and *śilambu* (woman's anklet) on the other, with the coiffre of *jaṭa* adorned by a serpent and the crescent moon, covering herself with the hide of the elephant as *uttarīya* (*ēkāśam*), wearing a snake as her breast band (*kaccu*), carrying a standard of lion (*āḷikkoḍi*). She is said to have fought with the *asuras*, and destroyed *Dāruka* and *Mahishāsura*, kicked the *Śakaṭa* and walked over the *Marudam* (*Arjuna*) tree and felled it. She is also said to have assumed legs of wood and fought when the *asuras* assuming the forms of

17. Perhaps the Sanskrit name *Kōṭavi* (or *Kōṭari*) is derived from the Tamil form *Korṟavai*.

snakes and scorpions, crawled under her feet to torment her. This concept lent the name to the dance pertaining to Durgā—*Marakkāl āṭṭam, Māyavaḷ-āḍiya marakkāl āḍalum* (*Śilappadikāram*, vii, 59). She is said to have swallowed poison with immunity and described as occupying half the body of the three-eyed Śiva as *maṅgai* (*Umā*) (*Śilappadikāram*, xx: 38) and as one (*Bhadrakālī*) who made the *Iraivaṇ* (Śiva) dance (*āḍalkaṇḍaruḷiya anaṅgu*). Thus she combined in her the concepts of Śiva and Viṣṇu and *Umā* and in her attributes the three *guṇas*.

What is most interesting is the attribution of the stag or buck (*kalaimān*) as her vehicle, a feature rare in iconographic texts and perhaps peculiar to the Tamil country, and found particularly in the sculptures of the Pallavas and contemporary Pāṇdyas and other dynasties dating between the second half of the 7th to the close of the 10th centuries A.D. The most noteworthy sculpture showing Durgā on a deer is from the Tanjore district now in the Madras Museum (9th century A.D.). There are references to her mount as the darting deer (*pāy-kalai*) in her descriptions as *Pāy-Kalai-p-pāvai* (line 70); *Kalai-p-pari-ūrđi*, and as one who is mounted on the *kalai* with screwed up black horns (*kariya-tiri-k-kōṭṭu-k-kalai* or *tiri-tari-kōṭṭu-k-kalai*). The stag as the mount of Durgā is also mentioned by Sambandar in his *Tēvāram* (2390: 2nd *Tirumurai*, 85th *padikam*, v. 31) as follows:—

... ..
Tirumakaḷ Kalaiyadūrđi Seyamādu Bhūmi
tisai Deyvamāna palavum, aru nedi nalla nalla,
avai nalla nalla aḍiyār avarkku mikavē

Kamban in his description of the fortification of Ayōdyā (*Bālakāṇḍam*: 3, v. 8) says:

Kāvalin, Kalaiyūr Kaṇṇiyai okkum

attesting to the persistence of this form in still later times.

Her other and more usual mount, the lion, is also mentioned as '*śeṅgaṇ-arimāṇ-śiṅgaviḍai*'. She is described by such names as *Amari*, *Kumari*, *Gouri*, *Śamari*, *Śūli*, *Nili*, *Aiyai* (*Āryā*), *Śeyyavaḷ*, *Korṟavai*, *Nallāl*, *Kaṇṇi*, *Śaṅkari* etc. She is also said to be *Nānakkoḷundu*, goddess of higher knowledge (*Āykalai*) and the hidden secret of the *Vēdas*, and in another context *Māyavaḷ* (*Śilappadikāram*, vi: 59) pointing to the beginnings of the concept of the *Dēvi* being both *Vidyā-śakti* (supreme knowledge) and *Māyā-śakti* (nescience).

As has been said before, she was considered to be the younger sister of *Māl* (Vishṇu) and called *Mālavār-k-kiṇṅilai* in *Śilappadikāram* (vi. 59). In this context the close association of Anantaśāyi Vishṇu with Durgā, in many cave and structural temples of the Tamil country dating from the middle of the seventh to the ninth centuries is significant. The famous combination of Anantaśāyin and Mahishamardinī sculptures in the Mahishamardinī cave temple at Māmallapuram is an outstanding example. In the same place just to the south of the rock-cut Anantaśāyin, sculptured on top of a low outcrop, between the eastern and western Śiva shrines of the Shore temple complex, is another Durgā sculpture inside the niche cut into the chest of a seated lion, sculptured in the round and squatting on a pedestal cut out of the same rock as the one containing Anantaśāyin. In addition, just to its north, and between it and the reclining Vishṇu is a recumbent stag, Durgā's other mount, in the characteristic sleeping pose of the caprines, with its head thrown back beside its body. In the Śiṅgavaram cave temple, dedicated to Anantaśāyin, there is a niche with a beautiful Durgā on the flank of the rock next to the facade. Far south in the Pāṇḍya country at Tiruttaṅgāl is a cave temple dedicated to Anantaśāyin and round the rock on the south is a similar niche containing Durgā. At Malaiyaḍippaṭṭi in the former Pudukkōṭṭai State (now in Tiruchirāpaḷli District) the rock wall of the Śiva cave temple adjoining the Anantaśāyin cave temple contains a Mahishamardinī scene, like the one in the Mahishamardinī cave at Māmallapuram. These cannot be dismissed as mere coincidences, and, considered in the context of the first mention of the relationship of Vishṇu and Durgā in the *Śilappadikāram*, would indicate the contemporaneity of the epic with this period.

Again in the same work, (xx: 37) she is referred to as "the one that comes after the six", viz., Chāmuṇḍā (Piḍāri) who comes last in the series after the six *māṭṭrikās* in the Saptamāṭṭrikā groups.

"*aruvarkku-ilaiya-naṅgai*".

SAPTAMATRIKAS

This indirectly presupposes a cult of Māṭṭṛigaṇas or the Saptamāṭṭrikās. These are significantly absent in the cave temples or monoliths of the Pallavas in the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam dating between 600 and 700 A.D. They are found for the first time in the Kailāsa-nātha temple at Kāñchī, built by Rājasimha (700-730 A.D.) and that too in the cloister built by his son Mahēndraavarman III and, as

such, would not date earlier than 720 A.D. In the cave temples of the Muttaraiyars who were occupying the Chōla country, and of the Pāṇḍyas, belonging to the 8th century and later, they are found either as a part of the cave temple or in association with them. Such cave temples are the Śiva cave temple in Tirugōkarṇam and that in Malaiyaḍippaṭṭi excavated by a Muttaraiya in the 16th year of Dantivrmān Pallava (812 A.D.), both in the Puḍukkōṭṭai area (Tiruchirāpaḷli District). Kuṇṇattūr in Madurai District and Tirukkaḷākkūḍi in the Rāmanāthapuram District.

A separate temple was built and dedicated to the Saptamātrikās in the time of Dantivarman Pallava (796-846 A.D.) at Alambākkam in the Tiruchirāpaḷli District and the place is called Dantivarmachaturvēdimāṅgalam in one of its early inscriptions,¹⁸ of the time of the early Chōla Rājakesari (Āditya I). That there was a temple of the Saptamātrikās in Vēlāchēri, Chingleput District in the middle of the 10th century A.D. is clear from an inscription¹⁹ of Pārthivēndravarman referring to gifts to such a temple. The last of the Pallava series of the 10th century A.D. is to be found in the Vīraṭṭāṇēśvara temple (all-stone) at Tirutani, Chingleput District built at the close of the reign of Aparājita Pallava (903 A.D.). This particular group of Saptamātrikās is interesting in that each of the mātrikās has her respective mount shown as her *lāñchana* in front of the pedestal, a feature unusual in the Tamil country, but characteristic of the Chālukyan area. The Saptamātrikās are to be found in the structural temples of the Pallava-Chōla transition period and in all early Chōla temples up to the time of Rājendra Chōla II, or till the close of the 11th century A.D. or later. In these early Chōla temples, particularly in those having the *aṣṭaparivāra* shrines, they have a separate shrine, a rectangular *āyatāśra* one on the southern side of the *pradakṣhiṇa*. In all the Saptamātrikā groups, the constituents are Brāhmī, Māhēśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and Chāmūṇḍā, with Viṇādhara Śiva (Dakṣiṇāmūrti) often taking the place of Virabhadra at the beginning of the series as the guardian deity and Gaṇēśa always at the end of the series.

The restriction of the list of *Mātrigaṇas* to seven goddesses points to a date after the *Bṛihatsamhitā* of Varāhamihira (550

18. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1909, No. 705.

19. *Annual Report South Indian Epigraphy*, 1911, No. 316; *South Indian Inscriptions* III, 191.

A.D.) which is silent about the numbers. Even in the *Mārkaṇḍēya purāṇa* (Ch. 88), the number and iconography or forms of the *mātrikās* or *śaktis* are undefined and varying. Their number is definitely restricted to seven in the familiar early Chālukyan *prasaṣtis* (*Hārītīputrāṇām sapta mātrbhirabhivardhitānām*, etc.). It would appear that this cult with a fixed number and definite iconography, as found in the early Chālukyan examples, migrated from the Chālukyan country to Orissa on the north-east and the Pāṇḍya and Pallava countries in the south and east of their territories. The cult seems to have lost its prominence in the Tamil country after the close of the 11th century. The last inscription in the Saptamātrikā temple, called Śelliyammaṇ temple, at Ālabākkam, referred to above, is of the 31st year of Chōla Rājādhirāja dēva I (1049-50 A.D.) mentioning endowments to the temple of Saptamātrikās for the conduct of their worship.²⁰ If the evidence of the sculptures is any indication, this would again point to a date later than the 7th century for the *Śilappadikāram*, the earliest Tamil work to mention the *Saptamātrikās* in association with Durgā (Chāmuṇḍā or Mahishamardini).

JYĒSHTHA

The cult of Jyēsthā seems to have had almost a parallel existence in the Tamil country. Though the worship of Jyēsthā seems to have been peculiar to the south, she is not seen either in the earlier Pallava cave temples or *rathas* or in association with them. But she is seen for the first time in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchi (730 A.D.) and subsequently in the other Pallava, Pāṇḍya and Chōla temples, all over the Tamil country till the close of the 11th century A.D.

In Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam near Madurai two inscriptions in Sanskrit and Tamil in the cave temple on the northern side of the hill, now called the Subrahmaṇya temple, refer to the excavation of the cave temple by Śāttan Gaṇavati, the minister of the Pāṇḍya Māraṇ Śaḍaiyaṇ; and the relevant Tamil inscription also mentions that his wife added to it a shrine for Durgā and excavated another cave temple near it for Jyēsthā in the year 773 A.D. Gopinatha Rao²¹ who has not seen this cave temple, which can be approached only through a tunnel in the later masonry of the *maṇḍapa*,

20. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1909, No. 700.

21. *Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, pp. 391-93.

wrongly supposes that the present image worshipped as Subrahmanya was originally the Jyēshthā referred to. The *ashtaparivāra* shrines in the early Chōla temples included one for Jyēshthā with another for the Saptamātrikās as in Tirukkattalai (Pudukkottai). A Chōla inscription from Tirupparāyitturai (Tiruchirāpaḷli)²² enumerates the *ashtaparivāra* including Jyēshthā—called Tiruk-kēṭṭai-k-kiḷatti, as also the inscription at Erumbūr²³ of the 27th year of Rājendra I. She is mentioned for the first time in Tamil literature in the Vaishṇava hymns called *Nālāyira-Divya Prabandham*, by one of the early Āḷvars, Toṇḍar-āḍi-p-poḍi:

*Nāṭṭināṇ deivam eṅgum; nalladu ōr aruḷ taṇṇālē
kāṭṭināṇ tiruvaraṅgam, uypavarkku uyyum vaṇṇam
kēṭṭirē nambi mīrkāl Geruḍavāhaṇaṇum nīrka-c
Cēṭṭai taṇ maḍi yakattu-c-celvam pārttu irukkiṇṇirē*

(*Divya Prabandham*, 880); Toṇḍaradippoḍi,
Tirumālai 10).

The Āḷvār's reference in derision to the foolish worship of Jyēshthā by people in the vain hope of acquiring the fulfilment of their desires, while there was the great God Viṣṇu, the conferer of all boons, whom they forgot altogether, speaks of the great popularity of this cult. We can place Toṇḍar-āḍi-p-poḍi or Vipra Nārāyaṇa round about 850 A.D.²⁴

That she was the goddess of evil and was propitiated for warding off evil will be clear from a stray verse in the *Nandi-k-kalam-bakam* where she is said to be the elder sister (Jyēshthā) of Lakshmi.

*‘Sēyya kamala-t-tiruvukku munṇiranda, taiyal uravu
tavirttōmē.’*

22. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. VIII, No. 560.

23. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1919, No. 318.

24. Toṇḍaradippoḍi's *Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci* is earlier than the *Tiruppaḷḷiyelucci* of Mānikkavācakar and his *Tirumālai*; later than Appar, since its very form is moulded after Appar's *Tirunērisai*, and the second half of *Tirumālai* 34 is almost identical (except for insignificant variations) with that of Appar IV: 75; 3. The second half of *Tirumālai* 17 is also identical with the last two lines of the *Tiru-k-kunṇun-tāṇḍakam* 13 of Appar. This would place the *Tirumālai* in the second half of the 9th century A.D. Vaiyapuri Pillai—*History of Tamil Language and Literature*, Madras (1956), pp. 121-22.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the *Bōdhāyana-Gṛihya-Sūtra* contains a chapter dealing with the worship of Jyēsthā, and the *Vishṇudharmōttara* mentions eight kinds of Jyēsthā images. Perhaps here we have an indication of the date of these two works also. The *Sēndaṇ Divākaram*, the earliest *Nigaṇḍu* or lexicon in Tamil, of the 10th century A.D.²⁵ mentions the Tamil names of Jyēsthā, eight in number as follows:—

Mugadi, *Thauvai*, *Kalati*, *Mūdēvi*, *Kākkai-k-Koḍiyāl* (one with the crow as banner), *Kaḷudai vāhani* (She of the donkey mount), *Śēṭṭai* (Jyēsthā) and *Keḍalaṇaṅgu* (*Alakshmī* or goddess of evil).

Though the worship of Jyēsthā has been discontinued long ago, and the Jyēsthā idols in the early temples are now found cast off or relegated to an obscure corner, a faint echo of people seeking prosperity from the 'lap of Jyēsthā' as *Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi* says in his hymn, is to be found even to-day in an unusual practice obtaining in the *Kāmākshī* temple at *Kāñchīpuram*. The *Kuṁkuma* (saffron powder) *prasādam* of *Kāmākshī* is not to be straightaway worn on the forehead, as in all the other temples, but has to be taken back and worn only after throwing it on the lap of a Jyēsthā image installed in a niche in the north wall of the *garbhagṛiha*, disfigured though by a vertical groove cut from the face down to the folded legs.

Thus among the *Dēvis*, *Durgā* seems to have held a high place and special shrines were dedicated to her as could be seen from the literary references quoted. The cave temple called *Kōṭi-kal maṇḍapa* and the *Draupadi ratha* in *Māmallapuram* are the earliest extant examples (640-700 A.D.). A natural gorge in *Paṇamalai*, serving as a shrine of *Durgā* as *Simhavāhani*, one of the earliest specimens of the kind, was consecrated by *Rājasimha Pallava* (700-730 A.D.) as his inscription there would indicate.²⁶ Another specimen from *Kaṇḍiyūr*, *Virattānēśvara* is a fine sculpture belonging to the early tenth century.²⁷ Reference has already been made to

25. *Vaiyapuri Pillai*, *Ibid*, pp. 164-65. The worship of *Jyēsthā* of the universe in visible form" and as the presiding deity of *Kukkanūru* is described in *Kalachuri Singhana's* copper-plate dated 1183 A.D. from *Ittagi*, *Raichur District* (*Annual Report, Indian Epigraphy*, 1953-54, No. 12 of App. A. and p. 2; *Indian Antiquary* Vol. IV, 274 ff.)

26. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. I, no. 31.

27. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1956-57, p. 41-43.

the addition of a Durgā shrine in the Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam cave temple by the wife of Śāttan Gaṇavati, the Pāṇḍya minister in 773 A.D. along with a separate excavation for Jyēshthā. According to the Tiruvālaṅgāḍu plates²⁸ Vijayālaya, the first of the Imperial Chōla line, erected a shrine for Nīśumbhasūdinī (Durgā) in his capital city at Tanjore, which he founded in about 850 A.D. The sculpture shows Durgā seated, with one of the two demons, (Śumbha and Nīśumbha) lying prostrate in front of the pedestal and the other being trampled by the left leg of the goddess.²⁹

NAVAKANDAM AND HEAD OFFERING TO DURGA

But the more ubiquitous form is that of Durga standing over the severed head of a buffalo, or a *padmapīṭha*. In some Durgā panels of this period may be seen a devotee offering his own head by cutting it off at the neck or making a part offering by cutting his left wrist, while another devotee on the other side sits adoring. On top are also shown flying attendants, flanked at the corners by a lion and stag, the two mounts of Durgā already mentioned. In one of them by the side of Durgā is also a *dhvajastambha* with a *śūla* ensign on top. Such panels are found in the Varāha cave temple and the Ādivarāha cave temple in Māmallapuram and on the rock face adjoining the facade of the Pallava rock-cut cave temple in Śingavaram in the Pallava country of Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, in the lower rock-cut cave temple in Tiruchirāpalli in the territory of the Muttaraiyars who were then in possession of this part of the Chōla country, in the Pallava-chōla transition temples in Puñjai (Nanippalli of the *Tēvāram*) and Puḷlamaṅgai, Tanjore District, in the Durgā shrine at the centre of the *maṇḍapa* in the Pāṇḍya cave temple at Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam, and near the Anantaśāyī cave temple at Tiruttaṅgāl in the Pāṇḍya country.

An inscribed slab³⁰ in the Subramanya temple in Mallam (Gūdūr Taluk, Nellore) dated in the 20th year of Kampavarman Pallava (968 A.D.) contains a sculpture of a decapitated man, his right hand holding a sword and the left holding his own severed head by its locks. The inscription refers to him as Okkaṇḍanāgaṇ Okkatindaṇ Paṭṭi Pōttaṇ and that he severed his own head as the

28. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. III, no. 205.

29. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1956-57, pp. 41-43.

30. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. XII, no. 106.

final offering and placed it on the altar, after offering *navakaṇḍam*, i.e., flesh from nine parts of his body; and an endowment of lands was made to his relative Paṭṭai Pōttan, in recognition of the act and a stone monument (*Kalnāḍu* — perhaps the inscribed *naḍukal* itself) was erected as a memorial.

*Okkoṇḍaṇ nāgaṇ Okkatindaṇ Paṭṭai Pōttaṇ
mētavam purinda denru bhaṭārikku
nava kaṇḍaṇ kuḍuttu kuṇṇaka-t-talai
aṟuttu pīḍilikai mēl vaiṭṭā ṇukku
Tiruvānmūr ūrār vaiṭṭa parisā-vadu.*

There are similar slabs depicting head offering in the Madras Museum collection, and some slabs of this type are found also in the vicinity of the Tiruvorriyūr temple.

For one who reads the elaborate descriptions of this act of head offering to Durgā and the worship of Durgā by the warriors (Maravar or Eyinar or Mallar) as a prize for the victory vouchsafed by the goddess (*kaḍaṇ-iruttal* or *śūrttal*) in the *Vēṭṭuvavari* and *Indravilavūr eḍutta kāthai* of *Śilappadikāram* (xx, and v. 11, 75-90) these would strike as exact sculptural representations of the poetic descriptions. This kind of vow was taken by the warrior class when they desired victory for their king in battles or even in their cattle raiding expeditions and hunts. The goddess is believed to have gone always in front of them assuring protection and victory. Along with the many instances cited above, this would also go to confirm the contemporaneity of the literary versions supplied by the *Maṇimēkalai* and *Śilappadikāram* with the earlier at least of the sculptural depictions. Such head offerings are described again in the *Kalīṅgattupparaṇi* (Kōyil 21) and in the Sanskrit work *Daśakumāra-Carita* in the narration of the *Śaiva Vrittānta* of Upākaravarma. The *Kālikā purāṇa* (Ch. 70) describes also the rituals connected with such human sacrifices. Among the sculpture panels referred to, those depicting the cutting of the left wrist by the devotee would perhaps represent the first stage of the *navakaṇḍam* offering and those depicting decapitation, the final phase of the act, called in the inscription *mē tavam* (highest penance).

SIVA-SAKTI AND VAISHNAVI—ĀRDHANARI AND HARIHARA

The concept of Durgā was more Śaivite even in the *Śilappadikāram*. Her Vaishnavite attributes, viz., conch and discus, and the complexion apart, she is described as having the *jaṭa* secured

by the serpent, and adorned by the crescent moon, the serpent again as her ornament, the tiger skin garment, the blackened neck resulting from the swallowing of the poison, from the effects of which, however, she was immune, and most of all, her sharing the body with the three-eyed god Śiva.

“*Kaṇṇudal-pāka-māludaiyāl*”; “*Kaṇṇudalōṇ pākattu maṅgai*”

(*Śilappadikāram*: 22)

She is also called Kaṇṇi, Śaṅkarī and Gaurī. Here we have the suggestion of the Śakti concept, with the Ardhanārī concept combined, in addition to her equation with Viṣṇu as Śiva's half, as conceived by Appar in the *Tēvāram* (4556—*Tirumurai*, iv, decad 10, v. No. 5—*Tiruvaiyāru*).

“*ari-yaḷāl-dēvi-illai-Aiyaṇ-Aiyāraṇārkkē*”

The Ardhanārī concept is referred to in other contexts in the *Tēvāram* and *Tiruvācakam* (e.g., Sambandar, *Tēvāram* 2388 and 3937; Appar 4789 and 6717 and Māṇikkavācakar, *Tiruvācakam*, 456).

The *Prabandhams* also refer to the Ḥarihara concept (eg. Pēyāḷvār, *pāśuram* 2344). The equation of Ḥarihara with Ardhanārī, emphasising the benign forms of Śakti combining the three *guṇas*, finds a development in the Lalitā cult, which became a special feature of the South. This would also reflect the Śiva-Śakti concept where the Śakti, if feminine is Durgā and if masculine Viṣṇu.

The earliest Pallava Ardhanārī is found on the Dharmarāja ratha, where the Pārvatī half too has two hands like the Śiva half. The other Pallava Ardhanārīs are one in Kāñchīpuram, and another from Māmallapuram now in the Madras Museum. In the early Chōḷa temples from about the time of Āditya I the Ardhanārī form replaces the Viṣṇu sculpture in the niche on the hind wall of the sanctum of a Śiva temple, as for example the unique seated form in the Kaṇḍiyūr temple³¹ and the standing forms in the Nāgēśvara temple in Kumbakonam and in the Mūvarkōil, Kodumbāḷūr, and though this gave place to the Lingōdbhava or Anṇāmalaiyār form, in many instances, it persisted till about the 13th

31. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1957-58, pp. 80-83.

century, for in the back wall of the sanctum of the Jambukēśvara temple in Nārttāmalai, built in 1205 A.D., we find an Ardhanārī.³² However Ardhanārī forms are found in other places on the sanctum wall as in the great temples of Tanjore and Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōlapuram. The earliest Harihara forms are found in the Dharmarāja ratha and Ādivarāha cave temple in Māmallapuram, in the cave temple No. 3 at Kuṇṇakkuḍi, in the Mūvarkōil and in the temples of Tanjore and Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōlapuram. Sometimes the place of Viṣṇu on the back wall of the sanctum of a Śiva temple is taken by Harihara.

As we have seen, the worship of the Mātrikās, Jyēsthā, etc., continued till about the close of the 11th century A.D., even after the influence of the *bhakti* movements of the Nāyanmārs and Ālvārs, of whom one has strongly criticised the worship of Jyēsthā, and the reformation brought about in the worship of Śakti by Saṅkara, in the first half of the 9th century A.D. In the early Chōla times, such goddesses as Durgā, under the names Kālapidārī, Durgā Paramēśvarī, Ēmaḷattu Durgaiyār Ōmkāra Sundarī and Piḍārī and others such as Śribhaṭārakī, Sarasvatī, Mahāmōḍi, Saptamātrkā and Sēṭṭaiyar (Jyēsthā) continued in worship as evidenced by the inscriptions (*vide* Sastri: Cōlas, p. 646). The shrines of Durgā, referred to as *munṛil* in *Śilappadikāram* are called *Tirumurram* or *Šattimurram*, as distinguished from the *Śrī Kōyil* of Śiva and Viṣṇu.

KAMA-K-KOTTAM-LALITA CULT

It was only from the time of Rājendra Chōla I, in the second quarter of the 11th century, as I have discussed elsewhere³³ that Ammaṇ shrines, popularly so called and forming separate shrines for *dēvīs*, were built. This constitutes a characteristic feature of the Tamilian temples, not found elsewhere. Such are called *Tirukkāmak-kōṭṭam*, and they formed an important unit of the temple complex built from this time onwards, and were further added to the pre-existing temples which did not possess them in their original composition, as for instance the Great Temples in Tanjore and Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōlapuram. Thus each temple, whether Śiva or Viṣṇu, came to have a shrine for the *dēvī* with the name appro-

32. *Manual of the Pudukkottai State* II, ii, p. 1078.

33. *Tirukkāmakōṭṭam — Proceedings of the All India Oriental Conference*, 1946.

pritate to that of the principal deity, viz., Bṛhadiśvara or Peruvuḍaiyār and Bṛhannāyakī or Periyannāyakī, Raṅganātha and Raṅganāyakī, Sundarēśvara and Minākshī, Ēkāmrēśvara and Kāmākshī. Such combinations familiar to every one can be quoted in thousands from all over the Tamil country and Kerala or wherever the Tamils built a temple complex after the middle of the 12th century. The example of the modern Viśālākshī temple in Kāśī (Vāraṇāśī) is the most outstanding.

The name *kāmāk-k-kōṭṭam* for the *dēvī* shrine was evidently after the name of the most important shrine or seat of the *dēvī* or *dēvī* cult in Kāñchīpuram, where she is called Kāmākshī. The insatillation of the *Śricakra* here by Śaṅkara, made this place an important *Śaktipūṭha* even as was the case of Kashmir and some other places in India. The earliest epigraphical reference to Kāmākōṭi of Kāñchī, so far known, is the undated inscription from Gōṭṭagaṭṭu in Nellore District³⁴ and another dated 1259 A.D. from Tripurāntakam in the Kurnool District,³⁵ both mentioning a chief, Pallava-Irumaḍi Bāsava Śaṅkara Allāḍa Prēmaya Dēva, lord of Kāñcīpura, a devotee of Kāmākōṭyāmbikā and the recipient of many boons from her. The Tripurāntakam temple itself was built in 1255 A.D. under the orders of Kākaṭīya Gaṇapati. Among the Kāmākshī temples in the other parts of the Tamil country, which derived their names in imitation of the one in Kāñchī, the earliest one in Dharmapuri, Salem District, is as old as the 11th century A.D.³⁶ This will take the antiquity of the Kāmākshī temple in Kāñchī to a period earlier than the 11th century, though the present structure or its inscriptions do not date earlier than the 14th century A.D. The find of many Buddhist sculptures in the temple precincts and the presence of a Jaina *mānastambha*, sticking out from the roof of the entrance *maṇḍapa* of the inner enclosure makes us look for the original site of the temple elsewhere in Kāñchī. The three Nāyaṁmārs, Appar, Sundarar and Sambandar refer to the Kāmākōṭṭam and to Kāmakkōṭi as follows:—

*Elūnda tirai nadi-t-tivalai nanainda tiṅgaḷ ilānilā-t-tikaḷ-
kinṇa vaḷar śaḍaiyaṇē, koḷum-pavaḷa-c-ceṅgaṇi vāy-k-
kāmak-kōṭṭi koṅgai-inai amarporudu kōlaṅkoṇḍa,
taḷum-buḷavē, varaimār-pil venṇū-luṇḍē, śānda moḍu śa-*

34. Nellore Inscriptions No. 16.

35. Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy, 1905, no. 217.

36. Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy, 1901, no. 307.

34 RELIGION AS REVEALED BY EARLY MONUMENTS

*ndanattin alaru taṅgi, aḷundiya śen tiru vuvuvilveṇ-
nīrrānē, avanākil Adigai Viraṭṭānamē*

(Appar-Tēvāram 6285; 6th Tirumurai, 4th decad,
verse 10).

*Nacci-t-toḷuvīrkāl namakku-idu śollir
kacci-p-poli Kāmakōḍiyudan kūḍi
iccit-t-irumbūlai-iḍaṇ-koṇḍa Īsaṇ
ucci-t-talaiyir, baḷikoṇḍu-la-lūṇē*

(Sambandar, Tēvāram 1855, 2nd Tirumurai 36th
decad, v. 4)

*Vāriruṇ-kulal vāṇeḍuṇkaṇ malaimakaḷ madu vimmu
koṇṇai-t, tār-iruntaḍamārpu nīṅgāt-t-Taiyalāl
ulakuyyavaitta,*

*kār irum poḷir kacci mūdūr Kāmakōṭṭam uṇḍāka nīr pōy
ūriḍum piccai koḷvadu eṇṇē Ōṇa kāndaṇṇaiyulīrē*

(Sundarar, Tēvāram 7271; 7th Tirumurai,
5th decad, v. 6).

While the first is a reference to the incident in the Puranic story of Umā (Kāmakkoḍi or Kāmalatā) embracing Śiva (Kamba or the support for the creeper) and leaving the marks of her breasts on the chest of Śiva, the two others are in the nature of a *nindā-stuti* asking Śiva why he should go about begging in the streets, when the Kāmakkoḍi had come to keep house for him in the Kāmakōṭṭam. Kamakkoḍi is taken to be the same as Kāmākshī or Kāmakkaṇṇi. A *San̄gam* poetess of Madurai, bearing the name Kāma-k-kaṇṇi is the author of *Nar̄ṇai* 243 and the appellation would indicate the antiquity of this name. This, like Kayaṇkaṇṇi (Minākshī), was perhaps in ancient times the name of the patron deity of the place, even as Campā was of Puhār, Mahālākshmi of Kolhapur, Kālī of Kālighāt and Mahākālī of Ujjayini. Kaṇṇi may also be interpreted in the sense of a pair or couple (*mithuna*), as it is used to denote a couplet or distich (as suggested by her other name Kaṇṇi in *Maṇimēkalai* 22:27), in poetry and the pair of opposed flowers forming a unit in a plaited garland. If it be so, Kāma-kaṇṇi would mean the loving pair and Kayaṇkaṇṇi, the *m̄na-mithuna*, an ancient auspicious motif. The idea of the patron deity is emphasised by a quotation of the commentator of *Śilappadikāram*, v. 11. 95-98:—

*Kacci-vaḷai-k-kaicci Kāma Kōṭṭam-Kāval
mecci-iṇidu-irukkum-mey-c-Cāttan kai-c-ceṇḍu*

Evidently she was worshipped as a form of Durgā and a temple called Ādi-pīṭhā Paramēśvarī temple, in the vicinity of the modern temple of Kāmākshī, containing a very old seated four-armed sculpture with three human heads on the pedestal, was perhaps the original site where the *Saktipīṭha* was installed, after the reformation of the worship by Śaṅkara.

GANESA

The cult of Gaṇeśa, who forms a component of the Saptamātrikā series, often found included along with Jyēsthā (as on either side of the facades of the two cave temples in Vallam of a later date) is not referred to in the *Śaṅgam* classics. He is singularly absent as a contemporary sculpture in the earlier Pallava cave temples and *rathas* till the time of Rājasimha (700-730 A.D.) and even then towards the close of his period, whereas he is to be seen in contemporary Chālukyan sculpture.

In the Rāmānuja maṇḍapa cave temple in Māmallapuram, which according to its inscription was excavated by Paramēśvaravarman I, and dedicated to Śiva primarily, though the other two shrine cells, all now destroyed, could have been meant for Brahmā and Viṣṇu, is an interesting *bhūtavari*. It is a frieze of *bhūtas* and *gaṇas* over the beam of the facade and below the overhanging cornice or *kapōta*. Of the twenty-seven *bhūtagaṇas* in the frieze, the central one is a pot-bellied *Kumbhōdara* and while twelve on either side of him carry over their shoulders two enormous garlands, a familiar motif in the earlier Buddhist *stūpas* of the Andhra country, the two extreme *bhūtas*, one at either end, are reclining and supporting the *kapōta*. Of these, the seventh *gaṇa* from the south has the head of an elephant over a human body suggesting that he was only one among the anthropomorphic or therianthropic *gaṇas* or *bhūtas* comprising such friezes and not a god of importance, having a special place in the pantheon installed in temple shrines. This is perhaps the earliest representation of the form in Pallava times. The same is again found as an ornament of the *kuḍu* arches in the earlier structural temples of Rājasimha, eg. in the Shore temple, and not even in a niche or *deva-kōshṭha* on any of their walls.

In all Pallava sculpture in Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, he is shown for the first time occupying a place of importance, as a recognised cult deity at the end of the Saptamātrikā series, in one of the cloister shrines of the Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchi, the latest of Raja-

simha's temples, while he forms a small *tōraṇa* crest over the niches on the walls of the main *vimāna*. He is found in the later structural temples of the Pallavas, eg. Mātāṅgēśvara in Kāñchī and Virattānēśvara in Tiruttani. Gaṇēśa again occurs as a constituent of the cave temples, of the Pāṇdyas and Muttaraiyars in the farther south, again dating after 700 A.D. He is found mostly in his *valampuri* form, with his trunk coiled to his right, on the side wall or hind wall of the *ardhamanḍapa* of these cave temples, as in Tirugōkarnam, Malayakkōvil, Kunṇāṇḍārkōil, all in the Pudukkōṭṭai area of the Tiruchirāpaḷli District, in the lower cave temple at Tiruchirāpaḷli and the Siva cave-temple in Tiruveḷḷarai in the same district. Further south, in the Pāṇḍya country, he is seen in the cave temples in Kuṇṇakkūḍi, Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi, Tirupparaṇkunṇam (northern or Subrahmaṇya cave), Śevilippaṭṭi, Tirumalāpuram, Kunṇattur (Nīlakaṇṭhēśvara) etc., and on the flank of the facade, in the cave temples in Vallam, Kuḍumiyāmalai, Dēvarmalai, Tirukkalākkūḍi etc.

This would indicate the popularity of this cult in the Tamil country soon after 700 A.D. which was its probable date of advent from the Chāḷukyan area, along with cults like the Saptamātrikā, represented earlier in that region. The absence of any marked variety as described in *Śilpa* and *Āgamic* works in the iconographic forms of the examples cited, except one example of a standing form as in the lower cave temple in Tiruchirāpaḷli, while all the others are sitting, would also indicate that it was not a cult which had entered earlier and had been undergoing development, marked by local characteristics, except the *valampuri* form, as in the case of other cults discussed above.

In structural temples of the Pallava-Chōḷa transition and in early Chōḷa temples as in Tirukkaṭṭalai, Tiruppaḷātturai, Erumbūr, Kaliyāppaṭṭi, Paṇaṅḡuḍi, and Vijayālaya Chōḷiśvaram, the first among the *aṣṭaparivāra* shrines round the central *vimāna* is a Gaṇapati shrine. In the larger temples of the later Pallavas and early Chōḷas and thereafter, he always comes to occupy the southern *devakōshṭha* or niche of the *ardhamanḍapa*, while the corresponding northern one contained a standing Durga, as in the Mukteśvara, Iravātanēśvara and Tripurāntakēśvara in Kāñchīpuram and the Virattānēśvara in Tiruttani among the Pallava series ending with the tenth century A.D. The cult has spread so much that Gaṇēśa today is one of the most popular and important deities found everywhere, in larger temples as one among

the many subsidiary deities, but also as the presiding deity in individual shrines as well as under tree shades, tank bunds and river banks.

In this context of the appearance of the Gaṇapati sculptures after 700 A.D. are to be viewed the references, (about ten in number), to Gaṇeśa in the *Tēvāram* collection. They are:

- (1) *pala pala kāmattarāki padai-t-teluvār mana-t-tullē
kalamalakkiṭṭu-t-tiriyum Gaṇapati eṇṇum kaḷirum*
(Appar: *Tēvāram* 4173; 4th *Tirumurai*, 2nd *padikam*,
v. 5, lines 1-2 *Tiru Adigai vīraṭṭānam*).

- (2) *Nāraṇaṇ-oḍu-Nāṇmukaṇ Indiraṇ
Vāraṇaṇ Kumaraṇ vaṇaṅguṇi kaḷar
Pūraṇaṇ*
(Appar: *Tēvāram* 5889; 5th *Tirumurai*, 65th *padikam*,
v. 10, lines 1-3. *Tiruppūvaṇūr*).

- (3) *Kai-vēḷamukattavanai-p-padaittār pōlum
Gayāsuraṇai avanār kolvittār pōlum*
(Appar: *Tēvāram* 6776; 6th *Tirumurai*, 53rd *padikam*,
v. 4, lines 1-2; *Tiruvīḷimīlalai*).

- (4) *Melliyalum Viṇāyakaṇum tōṇrakkaṇḍēn*
(Appar: *Tēvāram* 7015; 6th *Tirumurai*, 77th *padikam*,
line 3; *Tiruvāymūr*).

- (5) *sandanaṇ malar aṇi tāḷ śaḍaiyaṇ
tarta madattavaṇ tāḍai yḷ tāṇ*
(Sambandar: *Tēvāram* 1239; 1st *Tirumurai* 115th
padikam, v. 2 lines 1-2; *Tiru Irāmanadīccuram*).

- (6) *neruppuru veḷ viḍai mēṇiyarēruvar nerriyiṇ kaṇ
maruppuru vaṇ kaṇṇar tātai yai-k-kāṭṭuvār mā Murugaṇ
viruppuru pāmbukku mey-t-tandaiyār viral mātavarvāl
poruppuru mālikai-t-ten pura vat-t-aṇi puṇṇiyaṇē*
(Sambandar: *Tēvāram* 1266; 1st *Tirumurai*, 117th
padikam, v. 8 lines 1-4. *Tirup-pairama puram*)

The fourth line here suggests the installation of Gaṇeśa on the south wall niche of the *ardhamandapa* as a custom contemporary with Sambandar and incidentally indicate his date as about 730 A.D.

- (7) *piḍi yadaṇ uru vumai koḷa miku kariyadu
vaḍi koḍu taṇa daḍi vaḷipaḍu mavar iḍar*

*kaḍi Gaṇapati vara varuḷiṇaṇ miku koḍai
vaḍi viṇar payil vali vala murai yiraiyē*

(Sambandar: *Tēvāram* 1330; 1st *Tirumurai*, 123rd
padikam, v. 5, lines 1-4 *Tiruvallalam*).

- (8) *Śerriṭṭē verriccēr tikaḷnda tumbi moymburuṇ
cērē vārā nāl kōḍai-t-teriyilai paḍi yaduvāy
Orraiccēr murraṇ kombuḍai-t-taḍakkai mukkaṇ mik-
kōvādē pāymātānatturu pukar muka viraiyai-p-
Perriṭṭē marrippār poruttu mikka duḷkkamum
pērā nōy tāmē yāmaippirivu śeydavanadiḍaṇ
Karriṭṭē yeṭṭ-eṭṭu-k-kalai-t-turai-k-karai-c-celak
kānādārēśērā mey-k-kaḷumala vaḷanagarē*

(Sambandar: *Tēvāram*, 1364; 1st *Tirumurai*, 126th
padikam, v. 6. *Tirukkaḷumalam*).

- (9) *Kariyiṇ māṃmuka muḍaiya Gaṇapati tātai pal-pūdam
Tiriyā il bali-k-kēkuṇ celuṇṇuḍar śērtaru mūdūr*

(Sambandar: *Tēvāram*, 2509; 2nd *Tirumurai*, 29th
padikam, v. 3, lines 1-2 *Śirkālī*)

- (10) *maṇṇuḷakum viṇṇuḷakum ummadē āṭchi
malaiyaraiyaṇ porpāvai Śiruvaniyūm tērēn
eṇṇiliyuṇ peruvayiraṇ Gaṇapati-yoṇṇariyān
emberumān idu takavō-viyambi aruḷ śeyyir*

(Sundarar: *Tēvāram*, 7699; 7th *Tirumurai*, 46th
padikam, v. 9 lines 1-4 *Tirunāgai-k-kārōṇam*).

The *Paripāḍal* in its description of the different forms and names of Viṣṇu and his identity with other gods, calls him as *Aiṅgai-m-mainda*—the son with five hands—perhaps Gaṇapati (3: 37), in which case, the late date of the *Paripāḍal* collection will also be indicated.

These references from the *Tēvāram* would show that the concept of Gaṇapati in its developed stage was known to the three Nāyaṇmārs, Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar. Sundarar, at any rate, is believed to have lived sufficiently later than 730 A.D. But the date of the two earlier saints, has been largely derived from the supposed identity of Guṇadhara of the later *Periyapurāṇam* tradition with Guṇabhara, the surname of Mahendra Pallava I, and hence their contemporaneity with that king. This would be much earlier than the date afforded by sculptural evidence. In this connection one has to remember also the other *Periyapurāṇam* tradi-

dition of the identification of Śiruttōṇḍanāyaṇār, with Parañjōti, who is again believed to have been the general of the Pallava (Narasimhavarman Māmalla, and to have taken part in the Vātāpi invasion. The contemporaneity of Śiruttōṇḍar and Sambandar is believed to be suggested by the *palaśruti* afforded by *Tēvāram* 3480 (3rd *Tirumurai*, 63rd *padikam*, v. 10—*Tiruchengāṭṭānguḍi*).

Sendan pūmpunāl paranda Seṅgāṭṭānguḍimēya
Venda nūr-aṇi mārpan Śiruttōṇḍan vēṇḍa
Andan pūm kali-k-kāli yaḍikalaiyē-yaḍi paravum
Sandan koḷ Sambandan tamil uruippōr takkōrē

There is also another tradition of the meeting of Sambandar and Tirumaṅgai Ālvār embodied in two old stray verses (599, 600 of the *Peruntokai* collection by M. Raghava Iyengar), each purporting to be sung by one in praise of the other. The same is to be found in the *Divya-Sūri-charitam* and *Guruparamparābhāvam* of the Vaishnavas.

The *Tēvāram* hymns cited, clearly show that Gaṇapati was not only firmly incorporated into the pantheon, but also his filial relationship to Śiva was known by the time the hymns were sung. While Appar in his *Tēvāram* hymn 5889 mentions Gaṇeśa as having worshipped Śiva, along with Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Indra, and Kumāra, he calls Śiva the father of Āṇumugaṇ and Āṇaimugaṇ in his verse 6984. In another verse (6379) he refers to Gaṇeśa as the remover of obstacles—*Vikkiṇa Vināyakar*. Sambandar narrates briefly the local story of the origin of Gaṇeśa in the verse quoted above (1330). If the appearance of the sculptures in the second quarter of the eighth century is any indication, more reliable than the late literary traditions, it would point to the possibility of a later date to the *Tēvāram* of the two earlier saints, or at least to the particular hymn in question. The absence of any mention of Gaṇeśa in the post-*Saṅgam* works in contrast to his mention in the *Tēvāram* would also indicate a chronological gap between the two.

MURUGAN

The cult of Murugaṇ was very old in the Tamil country and in the numerous references to him in the earliest strata of the literature we get a glimpse of his original form and worship. The *Aiṅgurunūru* (308) refers to his great hill abode "*murugar mā-malai*".

The *Padirruppattu* (2nd decad, lines 5-8) refers to his fight with Śūraṇ and his hordes with his *eḥḥu* (*vēl*) ruddy with blood, mounted on his elephant;

*Aṇaṅguḍai avuṇar ēmam puṇarkkum
śūruḍai muḷumudal taḍinda pēr isai,
kaduñjiṇa viral vēl kaliru ūrndāngu—
śevvāy eḥḥam vilaṅgunar aruppa,*

His might was worshipped, and the worship consisted of the possessed dance—*veriyāṭṭu*, by the folk of the hilly tracts. He was called 'Śē-ey, *Neḍuvēl* or *Murugu*', was considered to live in, or be represented by, the Kaḍambu tree, was decorated by oleander garlands and offered preparations out of the *tiṇai* (*setaria*) and had goats or rams sacrificed—*Aiṅgurunūru* (vv. 245, 247 and 249), *Narrīnai* (vv. 34, 47, 82, 225), *Kuṟuntokai* (vv. 111, 214, 263, 360 and 362), *Padirruppattu* (v. 26), *Ahaṇānūru* (1:3; 59; 11; 98:10; 158:16) and *Puraṇānūru* (162-12; 23:3-4, 14; 56:7-8; 14; 56:7-8; 295:15; 299:6). His association was with the Kaḍambu tree and hence his name Kaḍamban—*Kār-alar-Kaḍamban*, as in *Maṇimēkalai* (4:49)—is referred to also by the other works of the later period, viz., *Perumbāṇārruppaḍai* (75), *Paripāḍal* (19:2 and 2:104) and *Śilappadikāram* (24-*Pāṭṭumaḍai Nēriśai*). *Narrīnai* (82) mentions for the first time his consort, *Vaḷli*—*Murugu puṇarndu iyaṇṇa Vaḷli* and *Aham* (59 and 149) makes, perhaps, the first reference to *Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam* as the seat of *Murugaṇ*, describing him as the wielder of the leaf-shaped *vēl* and the destroyer of *Śūrapaṇmaṇ* and his kin. The second place of *Murugaṇ*, as *Neḍuvēl*, mentioned in the earlier texts (*Puraṇ* 55) is *Śendil* or *Śir-Alaivāy* (*Tirucendūr*) which is also referred to in *Śilappadikāram* (24), profuse in its reference to *Murugaṇ* and his cult. A temple for *Murugaṇ*—*Murugaṇ Kōṭṭam*—is mentioned in *Puraṇ* (299:6). The *Śilappadikāram* (24: *Pāṭṭumaḍai* 8) mentions *Ēraham*, besides *Śēṅgōḍu* and *Veṅkuṇṇu* as his abodes. It is only the *Tirumurugārruppaḍai* that mentions all the six abodes, viz., *Paraṅkuṇṇu*, *Śir-Alaivāy*, *Āvināṅkuḍi*, *Ēraham*, *Paḷamudirśōlai* and *Kuṇṇrūtōṇḍal*, the last general abode being referred to in the same general term earlier in *Kuṟiṇjippāṭṭu* (lines 208-9).

In the *Pattuppāṭṭu* collection the *Perumbāṇārruppaḍai* (lines 457-9) describes *Murugaṇ* as the son of the goddess (*Umā*) that dances the *tuṇaṅgai*, and as one who killed the fierce *Śūraṇ* in the vast expanse of the sea. The *Maduraikkāṇṇi* of the same collection

mentions him, as the wearer of the garland of Kaṭamba flowers, and also the 'possessed' dancers, the Vēlaṇ and Śālini (lines 610-16); as also the *Paṭṭiṇappālai* (lines 154-55) which refers to the *veriyāḍal*. The *Kalittokai* too mentions him as *Sevvēl* (93:25-29) who killed the Śūraṇ.

The *Paripāḍal* has eight long poems on Murugaṇ (Nos. 5, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 19 and 21). They describe him as the rider on the elephant called *Piṇimukam*, the wielder of the *vēl* (spear) and the destroyer of Śūraṇ, who took the form of a mango tree, and as the god who cleft asunder the hill called *Kiravuñcham* (*Krauñcha*). The story of his birth is also narrated. He is described as the offspring of the god that destroyed the three cities (Śiva), generated in the womb of Umā, when at the request of Indra, the foetus was split into many parts, and given to him. From him the *ṛishis* took the parts and sacrificed them into the fire, and gave them as *avi* (*havirbhāga*) to all the six *Kṛittikā patnis*, Arundati excepted. And to each of them was born a child, all laid on one lotus blossom in the *poygai* (pond) in the *Himalaya* (*Śaravaṇa-p-poygai*), so that they reunited into one. This incorporates the Skanda-Kārttikēya-Śaravaṇabhava-Shaṇmukha cult with Murugaṇ. Even as a child Murugaṇ is said to have withstood a further attack by Indra's *vajra* when he split again into six only to reunite, and the awestruck Indra made Murugaṇ, the Commander—'Śēnāpati' of the celestials and gave his daughter Devāṇai (Dāvasēna) in marriage to him. Indra gave him also the peacock, Agni the pet cock, Yama the goat, and the other gods, the weapons and attributes, *viz.*, the *maruṇ*, sword, spear, axe, battle-axe (*maḷu*), the *kaṇicci* and *kaṇali*, *mālai* (*akshamāla*) and bell which he held in his twelve hands. Another context mentions the *pāśa* as one of them. This would show that as Dēvasēnāpati he was armed with all the weapons and attributes of the other *dēvas* produced from their own bodies (*śakti*). Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam was his abode where all the gods went to worship him. His consort was Vaḷli and he was installed there in the temple as the god of the Kaṭambu and the beloved son (Skanda-Māsīlāmaṇi) of the god with the darkened throat (*Nīlakanṭha*; Śiva) and the goddess who was without blemish (Māsīli-Umā). His espousing Vaḷli the offspring of the deer, by the *kaḷavu* method, is said to have often made his other spouse, Dēvāṇai, the daughter of Indra, jealous and weep. He is stated to have married Vaḷli in his earthly abode while Dēvāṇai was his celestial spouse. His mount is mentioned as the elephant—*piṇimukam ūrndu*—in some contexts (5:2) and as the peacock—*mayiṇ*—

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mēl-ñāyirū—in others (18:26). The peacock banner is mentioned along with the elephant mount in another place (17:48). The cock is mentioned only as his pet. His body is likened to the colour of fire, his garment and garland red, the colour of the shaft of his *vēl* coral and his face was like the rising sun.

The *Tirumurugārruppaḍai*, forming the later invocatory piece, by Nakkīrar, to a collection of earlier poems in the *Pattuppāṭṭu*, is a more elaborate description not only of the god, but also of his six abodes (later called *paḍai-vēḍu*), on which are based practically all the later concepts of Murugaṇ revealed in mediaeval sculpture, and the much later *Tiruppugal*.

The elephant mount is not commonly found or mentioned in sculptures or texts outside the Tamil country, and this concept persists in the Tamil country till the close of the tenth or eleventh century A.D. The *Paḍirruppattu* (11:6) and the *Puraṁ* (56: 7-8) are perhaps, the first to mention this

“kaḍum-ciṇa-viṇal vēl kalīru ūrndāṅgu”
(*Paḍirruppattu*)

maṇi-mayil uyariya-mārā venṇi-p
piṇi muka ūrdi — oṇ Śeyyōṇum eṇa
(*Puraṁ*)

The peacock as the banner is first mentioned in *Aham*, and later in the *Paripāḍal*, quoted above, and again in the *Tirumurugārruppaḍai* (line 122) where too the mount is said to be the elephant:

pal porī mañṇai vel koḍi uyariya
oḍiyā viḷaviṇ Neḍiyōṇ kuṇṇrattu
(*Aham*: 149: 15-16).

The *Silappadikāram* (14:10) is the first to mention a temple of the god whose banner was the cock, instead of the peacock.

Kōli-c-cēvaṇ-koḍiyōṇ kōṭṭamum
as also *Tirumurugārruppaḍai* (line 38)
Kōli-ōṅgiya venṇaḍu viṇaṇkoḍi

The cock banner along with the śakti or *vēl* is mentioned in *Bṛihatsamhitā* (Ch. 57) dated c. 550 A.D. as “*Skandaḥ Kumāra-rūpaḥ śakti dharō barhi kētuscha*”. The *Mahābhārata* (III, 231, 16) associates the cock as his pet and plaything—*tvam krīḍasē Shaṇmukha kukkuṭēna yathēṣṭa nānāvidha kāmārūpi*. *Murugaṇ* as the six-faced God finds mention for the first time in the *Silap-*

padikāram (5:170)—*Ārumuka-c-cevvēḷ aṇi tikaḷ kōyilum*, and the *Tirumurugārruppadai* (lines 91-118) explains the significance of each one of the six faces and twelve arms. However, six-faced forms of Murugaṇ, known as *Ārumukam* or *Shaṇmukha* is not known from early sculpture in the Tamil country except perhaps one from Kāñchī now in the Madras Museum, c. tenth century A.D. The *Tevāram* has nearly forty references to Murugaṇ, where in most of them Śiva is extolled as the father of *Kumaraṇ*, also called *Sēndaṇ*, *Kaḍambaṇ*, *Vēḷ*, *Kandaṇ*, *Murugavēḷ*, *Śaravaṇattāṇ*, *Vēlaṇ* and in one instance *Ārumukaṇ*, who was the husband of *Vallī*, the *Kuṛava* maiden, and who wielded the cock banner and destroyed *Sūrapaṇmaṇ*.

Evidences, numismatic, sculptural and epigraphic, are numerous, showing that Skanda was as much popular in the rest of India as in *Tamiḷakam*, from the beginning of the Christian era. The coins of *Huvishka* and the *Yaudhēyas*, the sculptures of the *Guptas*, *Ikshvākus*, *Chālukyās* and *Rāshtrakūṭas*, and the inscriptions of the early *Pallavas* and *Kadambas* attest to this. Recently a *Kārttikēya* temple in brick has been excavated in the *Ikshvāku* capital of *Vijayāpuri* in *Nāgārjunakoṇḍa* and two sculptures of Skanda, as *Kumāra*, holding his pet cock in his left arm pressed against the hip, illustrate the reference made to this feature ("*Śel-vavaraṇam*", *Paripāḍal*, 5:58).

As against this wealth of references early and contemporary in the indigenous literature, and the profusion of scriptural, numismatic and epigraphic evidence from outside, it is surprising to note that, excepting one or two cases, temples dedicated solely to Skanda as the principal deity are not seen and even the number and variety of sculptures representing him in the Tamil country during the period 600-1000 A.D. are rather meagre. The *Sahadēva ratha* in *Māmallapuram* was perhaps intended for Skanda, but one cannot be sure about this even. The sculpture of a two-armed deity seated on the neck of an elephant in the upper tier of the eastern face of the *Arjuna ratha*, generally supposed to represent *Indra*, may alternatively be Skanda, judging from the literary references cited above, particularly the *Tirumurugārruppadai* (109-110). The posture of one hand, the right, wielding the *aṅkuśa* and the other placed on the left thigh covered by the fine cloth garment is described as follows:—

*nalam peru kaliṅgattu kuṛaṅgin miśaiyaśai iya-
torukai, aṅkusaṇ kaḍāva voru kai*

There is a similar sculpture on the east of the upper tier of Mūvar Kōvil *vimāna* in Koḍumbālūr. The earliest principal representations in some of the Mahēndra and Māmalla cave temples and *rathas* dedicated to Śiva seem to have been Sōmaskanda panels in painting, stucco or wooden relief with Skanda, represented as a child on the lap of Umā. From the time of Paramēśvaravarman I to the time of Dantivarman Pallavamalla, these are carved as stone reliefs on the hind wall of the sanctum of the cave and structural temples: They are absent in the Muttaraiyar and Pāṇḍya cave temples, and among the latter the Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam cave temple alone contains a Sōmaskanda group in the sanctum of the Śiva shrine. On the eastern face of the ground floor or first *tala* of the Dharmarāja ratha youthful Skanda is sculptured in the niche at the southern end. In the northern shrine of the Trimūrti cave temple, he is represented as Brahma-Śāstā, youthful, four-armed and with the attributes of Brahmā, thus showing his superiority over Brahmā. Instead of interpreting this by the usual *Āgamic* story used by Gopinatha Rao to explain this sculpture, it may perhaps be taken to illustrate the almost contemporary local version embodied in the *Tirumurugāṛruppaḍai* (150-170). This refers to the cursing of Brahmā by Murugaṇ and his imprisonment, and the deputation of the *dēvas* including Śiva and Viṣṇu for his release.

In the Pāṇḍya country in which and on the borders of which, the earlier *Saṅgam* and post-Saṅgam works locate the earlier known Murugaṇ temples, the sculptures again are not many. The rock-cut cave temple (9th century A.D.) called Lāḍankōvil, adjoining the Narasimha cave temple in Aṇaimalai, Madurai District, is the only example of a cave temple solely dedicated to Subrahmaṇya. He is seated in the sanctum with his consort Valli, also seated, to his left. The most interesting feature of this temple is the presence of both the peacock and cock *dhvajās* sculptured in the shallow niches one either side of the shrine entrance. Perhaps this marks the transition phase, when the peacock banner of the earlier texts gave place to the cock banner of later descriptions (*Silappadikāram*, *Tirumurugāṛruppaḍai* and *Tēvāram*) and the peacock became more the mount. In the Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam cave temple, where Subrahmaṇya happens to be the chief deity in worship to-day, he occupies a subsidiary place on the back wall of the rock-cut *maṇḍapa* facing north, into which the two principal rock-cut shrines dedicated to Śiva and Viṣṇu situated on the western and eastern ends face. The original dedication of the temple was to Śiva, as the principal deity, in 773 A.D. according

to the inscription there. The Durgā shrine at the centre of the hind wall of the *maṇḍapa* was a slightly later addition formed by scooping away on either side of it, and it is in these two scooped-in parts that we find Subrahmanya on the east and Gaṇapati on the west of the Durgā shrine. Gopinatha Rao, while looking for Jyēsthā mentioned in the inscription referred to mistook the Subrahmanya figure, now covered with stucco, for a camouflaged Jyēsthā. Hence his remarks mentioned already. Subrahmanya, four-armed, is seated, with his consort by his side on his left and a *ṛishi*-like figure on the right. In front of the seat is a group of sculptures showing the peacock, the elephant, two *gaṇas*, a ram and another *gaṇa* holding aloft a *kukkuṭadhvaṇa* or cock-banner. On the lateral wall of the Durgā shrine, adjacent to Subrahmanya, is Brahmā. Over Subrahmanya are shown Sūrya and Chandra in the flying posture.

Another interesting sculpture of Subrahmanya as Kumāra is found in the rock-cut Śiva cave temple called Malaikkolūndiśvaram in Tirumalai, Rāmanāthapuram District. The sculpture occupies a large niche on the wall of the rock-cut *maṇḍapa* in front of the shrine cell. Kumāra, is shown standing as a youth in *dviḥaṅga*, his left hand placed on the raised up left hip in *kaṭi* and the right hanging down with palm in front of his right thigh. To his right is a dwarf *gaṇa* holding the long stalk of an umbrella, slant over the head of Kumāra, suggesting the story of his dancing the *Kuḍai-āttam*, with the slant parasol as the screen, during his battle with the *avunār*, as described in *Śilappadikāram* (22:52-53). On the same side is planted a tall *dhvajastambha* with a cock ensign on top. To the left of Kumāra is a kneeling devotee. In front of the pedestal are carved the reliefs of a ram on the right and a peacock on the left facing each other.

These two sculptures would clearly indicate that, in addition to the Elephant and Peacock mounts, Subrahmanya had sometimes a third mount the Ram, as suggested in the *Tirumurugārṛuppaḍai* (210), where it is called *takar* (ram)

*takaran-maññaiyaṇ pukar
il sévalam koḍiya neḍiyōṇ*

The *Purapporuḷ Venḇāmālai* also describes his ram mount as *ēlakam*.

Ēlakam mērkōṇḍu Ilaiyōṇ ikal venṇāṇ

This would emphasise his association with an aspect of Agni, whose vehicle it is. The cock banner in the latter example is in accordance with the later concepts. The peculiarities in these two sculptures, particularly, the *ram*, are not described by Gopinatha Rao.

The lower rock-cut cave temple in Tiruchirāpaḷli contains on the back wall of the *maṇḍapa*, which has two shrines one at either end dedicated to Śiva and Viṣṇu as in Tirupparaṅkunṇam, a standing figure of Subrahmaṇya as Kumāra, four-armed. He occupies the second niche from the west, next to that of Gaṇapati. On the northern face of the second storey of the Pāṇḍya monolithic *vimāna*, the Veṭṭuvāṅkōvil in Kaḷugumalai, is a fine seated form of Subrahmaṇya, four-armed, holding a rosary in one hand, the upper left, and what appears to be *śakti* in the upper right. An almost similar but slightly later sculpture belonging to the Pallava-Chōḷa transition, perhaps in the time of Aparājita (885-903), is known from Tiruvoṛṇiyūr. An example of Subrahmaṇya as *Śikhivāhana* (*Tārakāri*) is found in one of the panels in the Puñjai temple, Tanjore District, and another seated figure of large dimensions, now unfortunately broken, with a comparatively small peacock below, from Kāñchipuram, now placed in the Madras Museum, can be attributed to the tenth century A.D. The Pāṇḍya cave temple in Mūvaraivenṇrāṇ, Rāmanāthapuram District, dedicated to Śiva, contains in the *maṇḍapa* a sculpture of *Śikhivāhana*, i.e., Subrahmaṇya on the peacock, which is obviously a later addition of the eleventh century A.D. The sculpture relief of Subrahmaṇya with Vaḷḷi and Dēvasēna, standing on the hind wall of the rock-cut *maṇḍapa* of the Śiva cave temple called Umaiyāṇḍar temple in Tirupparaṅkunṇam is likewise a later addition to the Pāṇḍya cave temple and is later than the 11th century A.D.

The construction of a temple solely dedicated to Subrahmaṇya, in Kaṇṇaṇūr in the Pudukkōṭṭai area of the present Tiruchirāpaḷli district, in the middle of the tenth century A.D. marks perhaps the fresh spurt that the Murugaṇ cult had, from this time onwards. Till then, the rise of the *Bhakti* movement, giving greater prominence to Śiva and Viṣṇu by the Nāyaṇmārs and Āḷvārs seems to have lessened the importance of the Murugaṇ of earlier times. The Bālasubrahmaṇya temple in Kaṇṇaṇūr is unique in being an all-stone structural temple of the Pallava-Chōḷa transition. Much like all the Śiva temples of the period having the *nandi* at the four corners round the *grīva* above the shrine, it has four elephants, the

vāhana of Subrahmaṇya at the four corners on top of the *vimāna* round the *grīva* and another elephant placed in front of the shrine, again like the *nandi* of a Śiva temple. The original idol in the sanctum is unfortunately broken. The inscriptions also call it the Bāla-subrahmaṇya temple. The earlier forms of Subrahmaṇya of the Pallava-Chōla transition in the Pudukkōṭṭai area (*Pudukkōṭṭai State Manual*, II, 1, p. 698) are represented with the hand in position called 'cinmudrā' or with the *akṣhamālā* along with the characteristic weapon *śakti* as in the Kaṇṇanūr temple and in the subshrine of the Tirukkaṭṭalai Śiva temple. The one in the subshrine of the Nārttāmalai Vijayālayachōlīśvaram has a flaming head-dress. The figure on the upper tier of the Kaṇṇanūr *vimāna* on the southern side is that of Daṇḍapāṇi. In the 9th century temple at Kaṇḍiyūr the standing two-armed figure of Kumāra, holding a *śakti* in his right and a conch in his left hand is unique. Perhaps the conch symbolises him as a victor in battle.³⁷

In the great temple at Tanjore are epigraphical references to Rājārāja I and his relatives presenting bronze images—of Subrahmaṇya, along with those of Gaṇapati, Viṣṇu and Sūrya and other icons of Śiva. Like the other five contemporary cults, the Kāmāra cult also received the reformatory touches of Śaṅkara in the first quarter of the ninth century A.D.

BRAHMA

The concept of Brahmā as the creator of the universe was known from very early times as evidenced by references to him in the *Purāṇānūru* (194:5) and *Narṇṇai* (240:1)

“Paḍaittōṇ manra, appaṇpilālan”

and

“Aytē kamma, ivvulaku paḍaittōṇē”

He is called “toḍaṇkarkāṇ tōṇriya mudiyavaṇ”, i.e. “He, the primordial who appeared at the very beginning of creation” in *Kalittokai* (1:2 line 1). His lotus seat, and his origin from the navel of Viṣṇu are referred to in the post-*Saṅgam* works. The trinity

37. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1957-58—pp. 54-55, where the author of the article takes the conch to symbolise the *pranava* and hence identifies the form as Dēśika-Subramanya or Svaminātha or Gurumūrti, a concept, which appears to have not so much developed as in later times.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva as the chief Gods, and their respective duties are indicated in *Tirumurugārruppaḍai* (160-63). The three gods are also freely mentioned in their respective capacities in the hymns of the Nāyanmārs and Ālvārs with Śiva as the dominant of the three by the former and Viṣṇu by the latter. For example the eighth verse in the decads of Sambandar extols Śiva as greater than Brahmā and Viṣṇu.

TRIMURTI

The first creation of Pallava Mahēndravarmā I was the cave temple at Maṇḍagappaṭṭu with three shrine cells, where in his own inscription he says that he made this divine abode called '*Lakṣhitāyatanam*' (after his own title *Lakṣhita*) in equal importance, for the gods Brahmā, Īśvara and Viṣṇu. It was only after this very first in the new mode of excavation of temples, into the live rock, for the Trimurtis that he started making separate temples for Śiva or Viṣṇu. Māmalla again has his earlier cave temple in Tirukkaḷukunṇam, completed immediately after his conquest of Vātāpi (642 A.D.), where the main shrine is dedicated to Śiva, with sculptures of Viṣṇu and Brahmā, one on either side of the shrine entrance. Again Paramēśvaravarman I excavated the so-called Rāmānuja maṇḍapa cave temple and the Dharmarāja maṇḍapa cave temple, called Atyanta-kāma Pallavēśvaram in Māmallapuram, with three shrine cells, apparently for the Trimūrti, the central one being for Śiva.

In the Trimūrti cave temple in Māmallapuram, datable towards the close of Paramēśvara's reign (700 A.D.) significantly enough, the place of Brahmā in his shrine on the north is taken by Brahmasāsta, indicating the dominance of Subrahmaṇya, or his equation with Brahmā. In the structural temples of Rājasiṃha, eg. the Shore temple, the Kailāsanātha temple and the Paṇamalai temple, Brahmā and Viṣṇu find their places on the inner faces of either walls of the *antarāla* or vestibule flanking the passage into the shrine. This practice continues till the later Pallava times, while in the Vīraṭṭāṇēśvara temple at Tiruttani, as also in many of the early Chōla temples, Brahmā occupies the northern niche on the outer wall of the *vimāna*, and Viṣṇu is relegated to the western niche behind the sanctum, who in the early Chōla times is often displaced by forms of Harihara or Ardhanārī, which again by about the middle of the tenth century give place to the Liṅga-purāṇamūrti or Aṇṇāmalaiyār. In the case of the Pāṇḍya monolithic temple, Veṭṭuvāṅkōil in Kaḷugumalai, the place of Brahmā

on the northern side of the *grīva* is taken by Subrahmaṇya, as in the Trimūrti cave temple. Separate shrines for Brahmā are evident from the large early Chōla sculptures of Brahmā in the round from Tiruvaiyāru, Karuttattāṅkuḍi and Kaṇḍiyūr in the Tanjore District. While in all the sculptural representations Brahmā is shown with four faces (three visible in bas-reliefs) and without a beard, there are a few, as in the example from the wall niche in Kaṇḍiyūr, where he is shown bearded as in the northern examples.³⁸

The combination in about the middle of the eighth century A.D. of the Trimūrti concept and the gods of the *śaṅmata* or six creeds viz., *Śaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Gāṇapatya*, *Kaumāra*, *Saura* and *Śākta* is remarkably illustrated in the lower rock-cut cave temple in Tiruchirāpalli. It consists of a long rock-cut *maṇḍapa* facing south with two shrine cells, one at either end, east and west. The east facing shrine is dedicated to Śiva and is empty as in all earlier examples, the west facing one dedicated to Viṣṇu containing his sculpture. The back wall of the *maṇḍapa* in between has five large niches with five prominent sculptures of Gaṇeśa, Kumāra, Brahmā, Sūrya and Durgā, from west to east in the order mentioned. Thus with Śiva and Viṣṇu in either end shrine, and Brahmā in the middle niche at the centre of the *maṇḍapa*, the Trimūrti group is complete, and, excluding him the rest will make up the *śaṅmata* group. This is anticipated slightly earlier in the Trimūrti cave temple of Paramēśvaravarman I at Māmallapuram where we have a combination of Brahmā and Subrahmaṇya in the northern shrine, Śiva in the middle shrine, Viṣṇu in the southern shrine and a Durgā niche to the south of it. Gaṇapati and Sūrya alone are omitted.

This norm set by this combination in the heart of the Chōla country, lying between the Pallava country in the north and the Pāṇḍya country in the south, was apparently followed up in the respective regions with slight variations. Thus in the Pallava country, where the construction of stone structural temples was in vogue by this time, the arrangement came to be as follows:—Ganapati in the niche on the south wall of the *ardhamāṇḍapa*, and Dakṣiṇāmūrti in the south wall of the *garbhagriha*, Viṣṇu in the west, and Brahmā on the north

38. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1957-58, fig. 8.

walls of the *garbhagriha* and Durgā on the north wall of the *ardhamanḍapa* with the elimination of Sūrya and Subrahmaṇya, perhaps because the former was represented by Viṣṇu and the latter, as Dēśika, was represented by Brahmā or Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Such an arrangement is found in the Mukteśvara, Iravātaneśvara and Tripurāntakeśvara temples in Kāñchi and the Virattāneśvara in Tiruttani. This becomes a feature of the temples of the Pallava-Chōla transition and subsequent Chōla temples, throughout the Tamil country.

In the Pāṇḍya country, where cave temples were excavated till the close of the tenth century, the Tirupparankuṇṇam cave temple, of plan almost similar to the lower cave temple at Tiruchirāpalli has its *manḍapa* facing north with shrine cells for Śiva in the form of Sōmāskanda (and *līṅga*), and Viṣṇu on the west and east ends. Soon after the excavation of the cave temple by Śāttan Gaṇapati in 773 A.D., his wife added the Durgā shrine by excavating into the back wall of the *manḍapa* at its centre with sculptures of Subrahmaṇya and Gaṇapati in the recesses of equal dimension to its west and east. Here the Sūrya of the *shaṇmata* is shown over Subrahmaṇya and Brahmā of the Trimūrti group on the adjacent wall. The cave temples at Tirumalāpuram, Tirunelvēli District and Śevilippaṭṭi, Rāmanāthapuram District, having a single shrine cell for Śiva in each case, have sculptures of Gaṇapati, Viṣṇu, and Brahmā, Sūrya and Subrahmaṇya being omitted. Sūrya and Subrahmaṇya, however, did not remain out of the group in worship for long, for soon in the Pallava-Chōla transition and early Chōla temples they found separate shrines in the *aṣṭaparivāra*, or the eight shrines surrounding the main *vimāna*, a scheme which continued till the close of the eleventh century A.D.

It may be recalled here that close on this, in the first quarter of the ninth century A.D., Saṅkara reformed the six cults *viz.*, those of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Gaṇapati, Kumāra (Subrahmaṇya), Sūrya and Śakti, extolling at the same time the concept of Śiva as the teacher *par excellence*—Dakṣiṇāmūrti.

CHANDESA

Commencing from the period of the Pallava-Chōla transition (850-950 A.D.) the *aṣṭaparivāra* included also the shrine of Chaṇḍeśa or Chaṇḍikēśvara (or Tanḍēśvara in inscriptions) fol-

lowing the impetus given by the *Tēvāram* hymnists. This became a regular, and dominant feature of the Śiva temples of the Tamil country in the succeeding epochs. The earliest sculpture depicting the story of Śiva blessing Chaṇḍēśa and making him his primary servant—*mūlabhṛitya*—is to be found in Māmallapuram. One is on the second *tala* of the Dharmarāja ratha which was brought to its present stage of completion by Paramēśvaravarman I (670-700 A.D.). The sculpture inside the central shrine of the Mahishamardini cave temple, where also work continued to be done till the time of Paramēśvara I, is unique among the Sōmāskanda sculptures in that it contains besides the usual Śiva, Umā and Skanda, with Viṣṇu and Brahmā in the background on either side, a recumbent *nandi* and a devotee, kneeling, and Śiva holding what appears to be a garland in one of his hands, suggesting the Chaṇḍēśānugraha form.

There are about eighteen references to the story of Chaṇḍēśa in the hymns of Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar in the *Tēvāram*, eight by Appar (4627, 4636, 4792, 4808, 5243, 5928, 5965 and 6431), seven by Sambandar (521, 670, 1147, 3378, 3805 and 4039), and four by Sundarar (7382, 7619, 7786 and 8121). Māṇikkavācakar refers to him in the *Tiruvācakam*, 319 (*Tiruttōṇḍkkam*, 7).

A few more sculptures of Chaṇḍēśānugrahamūrti, are to be found in the structural temples of the Pallavas. It was Rajaraja Chōla I who built a prominent and separate shrine for Chaṇḍēśa, immediately to the north of the vestibule of the main *vimāna* in Tanjore and thereafter it has become a regular feature, occupying the same place in the plan of all Śiva temples till today in the south. The best sculpture of Chaṇḍēśānugrahamūrti is the well-known one on the northern wing of the eastern face of the main *vimāna* in Gaṅgaikōṇḍachōlapuram, built by Rājendra Chōla I. If instead of a mere sculpture depicting the story of Chaṇḍēśa, as in the Māmallapuram sculptures mentioned, and, as many other stories relating to Śiva's deeds are, Chaṇḍēśa comes to occupy a position equal to that of the other deities in the *aṣṭaparivāra* pantheon of the Pallava-Chōla transition, it is because of the recognition of his greatness and divinity by the Nāyanmārs. This again may possibly be an indication of the period of the three Nāyanmārs as between 650-850 A.D. It is to be noted also that in this respect Chaṇḍēśa has come to enjoy a unique preference among the earlier devotees, prior to the *Tēvāram* hymnists.

ŚIVA

Even the earliest mention of Śiva in the *Aham* and *Puṛam* collections reveal a developed iconographic concept of Śiva the god, who is not identified with any pre-existing local god under a local name, as Vishṇu, Balarāma and Subrahmaṇya, for example, were under such local names as Māyōṇ, Vāliyōṇ or Murugan. His abode is the *Al* or *Ālam* (*pipal*) tree and he is the three-eyed god, who gave the four ancient works—the *vēdas*, and the place of his worship was the open space in front of the tree—*ālamurṛam*.

*nāṇmarai mudu nūl mukkaṭ śelvaṇ
ālamurṛam*

(*Aham*, 181: 16-17)

Again, *Puṛam* (166: 1-4), states that the thoroughly conceived ancient work, consisting of four divisions—the *vēdas* and the six parts or *aṅgas*—were ever residing in the mouth of Śiva, the primordial being of the hoary past.

*naṇru āynda nāl nimir śaḍai
mudu mudalvaṇ vāy pōkādu,
oṇru purinda īr-iraṇḍin,
āru uṇarnda oru mudu nūl*

(*Puṛam*, 166: 1-4)

The idea is repeated many times in the *Tēvāram* and *Tiruvācakam* hymns.

Narriṇai (343:4) and *Puṛam* (198:9; 199:1) speak of the divinity of the *Al* tree as *Kaḍavuḷ ālam*, due to its being the residence of god, evidently Śiva, as would be clear from the other descriptions, eg., *Kalittokai* (81:7; 83:14), *Śirupānārruppaḍai* (line 97) of the *Pattuppāṭṭu* collection. The *Maṇimēkalai* (3:144) and *Silappadikāram* (Ch. 24) refer to Śiva as *Ālamar-Śelvaṇ*, while the *Tirumurugārruppaḍai* (1-256) gives the variant *Al-keḷu-kaḍavuḷ*. *Puṛam* (56) describes him as the god with matted locks, ruddy like the fire, and the blackened throat (*Nīlakaṇṭha*), who wields the invincible weapon called *maḷu* (axe) and who holds aloft the banner of the bull.

*ērru valaṇ uyariya eri maruḷ avir śaḍai
māṇru aruṁ kaṇicci maṇi miḍarṇōṇum.*

(*Puṛam*, 56: 1-2)

Again *Puṛam* (55: 1-5) describes him as the god of the dark throat (*Nīlakaṇṭha*) with a third eye in his forehead, who wielding the bow, that was the great mountain (*mēru*) strung by the snake (*Vāsuki*), destroyed the three cities (*tripura*) and vouchsafed victory to the mighty gods (as *Tripurāntaka*).

oṅgu malai peru vil pāmbu nāṇ koḷḷ-ī
oru kaṇai koṇḍu mū eyil uḍarri
peru viṛal amararkku veṇṇi tanda
karai miḍarṛu aṇṇal Kāmar-śeṇṇi
piṛai nudal viḷaṅgum oru kaṇ

(*Puṛam*, 55: 1-5)

The third eye and the black throat (*Trinētra* and *Nīlakaṇṭha*) are described again in *Puṛam* (91: 5) as

pāl purai piṛai nudal polinda śeṇṇi
nīlamaṇi miḍarṛu oruvaṇ

(*Puṛam*, 91: 5-6)

The *Kalittokai* in two contexts (i, 2, lines 1-5 and ii, 38, lines 1-5) describes Śiva as *Tripurāntaka* with three eyes (*Mukkaṇṇāṇ*) who at the request of the gods headed by the Patriarch who appeared even at the very beginning (*Brahmā*) destroyed the three cities and as one who wielded the mountain as his bow and punished the ten-headed *arakkāṇ* (*Rāvaṇa*) when he tried to uplift the *Himālaya*, where he was seated along with his consort *Umā* (*Umā-sahita*).

toḍangar kaṇ tōṇṛiya mudiyavaṇ mudalāka,
aḍaṅgāḍār miḍal śāya amarar vandu irattaliṇ,
maḍaṅgal pōl śinai-imaṇam śey avuṇarai-k
kaḍandu aḍu munpoḍu Mukkaṇṇāṇ mū eyilum
udaṇṇakkāl

(*Kalittokai*, i, 2: lines 1-5)

and

imaiya vil vāṅgiya īrṇjaḍai andaṇaṇ
umai amarandu uyar malai irundaṇaṇāka,
ai-iru talaiyiṇ arakkar kōmāṇ
toḍip-poli taḍak-kaiyiṇ kīl pukundu, aṇṇ malai
edukkal śellādu ulappavaṇ pōla

(*Kalittogai*, ii, 38: lines 1-4)

54 RELIGION AS REVEALED BY EARLY MONUMENTS

The *Tirumurugārruppaḍai* (lines 151-54) of the *Pattuppāṭṭu* collection, has again the same Umā-Mahēśvara, Ardhanārī, Vṛishabhadvaja and Tripurāntaka concepts.

... .. vel ēru
 valam vayiṇ uyariya, palar pukaḷ tiṇi tōḷ
 Umai amarndu viḷaṅgum, imaiyā Mukkaṇ
 mū-eyil murukkiya, muraṇ miku-śelvaṇum

The *Maṇimēkalai* (i, 54-55) describes him as the god with the third eye in the fore-head and as the first among the gods, the godlings of the city coming last in the series.

nudal viḷi nāṭṭattu Iraiyōṇ mudalāka-p
 pativāḷ śadukkattu-t-teyvam īru āka

The *Śilappadikāram* in two contexts (6:40-45; 28:66-75) describes Śiva as the dancer, dancing the mode called *Koḷukkoṭṭi* or *Koṭṭic-cēdam* (the dance of victory) along with Umā, and the dance called *Pāṇḍaraṅgam* for Brahmā, as the charioteer of *Tripurāntaka*, to witness

Tiripuram eriya-t-tēvar vēṇḍa,
eri muka-p-pērambu ēval kēṭpa,
Umaiyaṇ oru tiraṇāka, ōṅgiya
Imaiyaṇ āḍiya Koḷukkoṭṭi āḍalum;
tēr muṇ ninra tiśai mukaṇ kāṇa,

Pāradi (Bhārati) yāḍiya viyaṇ Pāṇḍaraṅgamum;

and :

Tirunilai-c-cēvaḍi śilambu vāy pulambavum,
pari taru šeṇ kaiyil paḍu parai ārppavum,
šeṇkaṇ āyiram tirukkurippu aruḷavum,
šeṇjaḍai seṇru tiśai mukam alambavum;
pāḍakam padaiyādu, śūḍakam tuḷaṅgādu
mēkalai oliyādu, meṇmulai aśaiyādu,
vār kuḷai āḍādu, maṇi-k-kuḷal aviḷādu,
Umaiyaṇ oru tiran āka, ōṅgiya
Imaiyaṇ āḍiya, Koṭṭi-c-cēdam

Kālī (Durgā) making Śiva dance, as mentioned in *Śilappadikāram* (20:34-40) has already been referred to. This image of the dancer with the *jaṭa-maṇḍala* whisking in space and Umā watching or dancing anticipate some features of the *Ananda tāṇḍava* iconography of later times, peculiar to the Tamil country. The same work (2:38-39) hints at the *Chandraśekhara* aspect of Śiva as one

“who wore with grace the crescent moon while the gods stood adoring him”.

*Kuḷavi-t-tiṅgaḷ imaiyavar ētta
aḷakoḍu muḍitta*

.. ..
periyōṇ taruka-tiru nudal

From thousands of hymns in the *Tēvāram* we get an idea of the iconography of some of the important forms or aspects of Siva such as Ardhanārī (3937) Umamahēśvara (97), Ēkapāda (234), Ekapāda Trimūrti (1382), Gaṅgādhara (2567), Gaṅgā visarjana (4113), Kaṅkāḷa (6528), Kalyāṇasundara (7380), Gajāri (1988, 4472), Kāmadahana (4819), Kālāri (212), Kirāta (6585), Harihara (4804), Sadāśiva (3545), Chaṇḍeśānugraha (6413), Chandraśekhara (1), Sōmāskanda (6498), Dakṣiṇāmūrti (7894), Tripurāntaka (113), Pāsupata (6743), Bikṣhātana (12), Bhujaṅga-trāsa (2), Bhairava (2891), Ṛishabārūḍa (1), Lingōdbhava (138, 6175, 6984), Viśhāpaharaṇa (2) and Jalandhara (4112).

Such rare forms, including some dancing ones, as Garuḍāntika (6780), Kūrmāsamhāra (2), Sakala Śiva (3545), Chakradāna (4638), Chaṇḍatāṇḍava (4824), Sadānṛitta (4528), Śarabhamūrti (7275), Śārdūlahara (733), Simhaghna (8235), Dakṣhayajñahata (7191), Brahmaśiraḥ-khaṇḍa (1411), Raktabikṣhāprasādana (7183), and Varāhasamhāra (2) are also mentioned.

Many of the common ones are mostly found in the sculptures of the period between 600 and 1000 A.D. in the Pallava, Pāṇḍya, Muttaraiya, and early Chōḷa temples.

In the eighth verse of every one of his decads, Sambandar refers to the incident of Rāvaṇa trying to lift the *Kailāsa* on which Śiva and Umā were seated and to Śiva's pressing it down by his toe, causing Rāvaṇa's discomfiture. This story in sculpture occurs for the first time in the late Pallava structural temples dating after 730 A.D. *eg.* in the Mukteśvara, Mātangeśvara and Piravātaneśvara in Kāñchī, and in the Tirupparaṅkunṇam Pāṇḍya cave temple (773 A.D.) to the west of its facade. Similar sculptures in Ellora, also belong to a period after 750 A.D. Such a sculpture is absent in the Pallava-Chōḷa transition or early Chōḷa times, and is again to be found as a rare instance in the Paḷaiyārai temple dating after 1100 A.D. This again seems to be indicative of the contemporaneity of the Nāyaṇmārs and the Kalittokai with this period 700-850 A.D.

DAKSHINAMURTI

Perhaps the references to Śiva as the lord of the four *vēdas* and as one seated under the banyan tree in the *Ahanāṇṇūru* are the germs of the later concept of Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Earlier sculptures of Śiva as Mahāyōgi, are known from elsewhere.

ñālam nārum nalam keḷu nalliśai
nāṇ marai mudu nūl mukkaṭ-celvan
ālamurram kaviṇ peṇa-t-tai iya
poygai sūḷnda poḷil maṇai makalir

(Aham 181: 15-18).

But the earliest sculpture of Śiva as Dakṣiṇāmūrti, perhaps another unique southern concept, is in the Kailāsanātha temple in Kāñchī (730 A.D.) where it occurs on the southern wall of the *vimānas* of the Rājasimhēśvara and Mahēndravarmēśvara and on the southern wall of the Olakkannēśvara in Māmallapuram, also built by Rājasimha (700-730 A.D.). Subsequently the sculpture occurs in the Mukteśvara, Airāvatēśvara, Iravātaneśvara, Piravātaneśvara and Tripurāntakeśvara in Kāñchī, on the southern side of the second storey of the Pāṇḍya monolith called Veṭṭuvān Kōil in Kaḷugumalai, and on the south wall of the *vimāna* of the Virāṭṭānēśvara at Tiruttani, built in Pallava Aparājita's time (903 A.D.). It becomes a regular component of all Śiva temples thereafter, placed in its different forms in the niches of the various *talas* or storeys of the *vimāna*. Sambandar refers to Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the *Guru* or teacher as follows:

nūl aḍainda kolkaiyālē nunnāḍi kūḍutarṅku
māl aḍainda nālvar kēṭka nalkiya nallarattai
āḷaḍainda nīḷal mēvi arumarai ṣoṇṇadu eṇṇē
śēḷaḍainda taṅkaḷaṇi-c-Cēyñālūr mēyavaṇē

(Tēvāram 515; 1st Tirumurai, 48th decad, verse 1).

Sundarar has it as follows:—

kāḍu pottarai-k-kiṇṇarar uluvai kaḍikkum paṇṇakam
piḍi-p-paruñṇiyam, kōḍiṇ mātavar kuḷuvuḍaṇ
kēṭpa kōla ālñiḷar kīḷ aram pakara

(Tēvāram, 7894; 7th Tirumurai, 65th decad, verse 9).

Appar refers to him as the *Guru* himself in two places (5566, 6934). The Vaishṇavite version in the *Prabandham* is that Śiva's sitting under the banyan tree and preaching to the four disciples was by the blessings of Viṣṇu,

These appear to be only an elaboration of the earlier ideas of the *Alamar śelvan* or *Āl keḷu Kaḍavuḷ* and of Śiva being the repository of the wisdom of the *Vēdas*, reflected amply in earlier literature. The conception of Śiva as the expounder of the truth of the *Vēdas*, seated under the banyan or pipal tree, with four disciples, and often a deer under him is strongly reminiscent of a similar and well known concept of the Buddha represented in the earlier sculptures, to which perhaps the Dakṣiṇāmūrti concept may be traced. In the Orissan and Eastern Chalukyan (Biccavolu-East Godavari) temples (8th century) Lakuliśa occupies the place of Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Saṅkara too, who extolled this concept of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, had four disciples. Significantly enough, the Dakṣiṇāmūrti form, recognised as such, is found for the first time in the Chalukyan area, in the Saṅgamēśvara at Paṭṭadakkal, built between 700 and 730 A.D. in the time of Chālukya Vijayāditya with the help of architects from the south, and modelled after the Pallava structural temples of Rājasimha. The earlier Dakṣiṇāmūrtis are of the *yōga* or *vyākhyā* type (meditation and exposition) as in the Pallava examples cited and in the Pallava-Chōla transition period. The *Vīṇādhara* form often occurs as in the Mūvarkōil, Koḍumbālūr and is mentioned by Appar (5214), and Sambandar (2388). The Dakṣiṇāmūrti from the Vīraṭṭānēśvara at Kaṇḍiyūr is seated in half profile in a very easy posture with both legs bent at the knees and crossed over, a rather peculiar and characteristic pose.³⁹ The *Jñāna* form is found as in Tiruvēṅgaivāśal, where he is again seated in the *utkuṭikāsana*, a pose suitable for meditation.⁴⁰ Another specimen of Jñāna Dakṣiṇāmūrti is to be seen on the south wall of the sanctum of the Jambukēśvaram temple in Nārttāmālai⁴¹ built in the year 1205 A.D. It is not also uncommon to find the different forms of Dakṣiṇāmūrti on the southern side of the various *talas* of a storeyed *vimāna*. The concept of Dakṣiṇāmūrti becomes more clear in the *Tiruvācakam* hymns of Māṇikkavācakar (270 and 287), viz., the conception that Śiva sat under the *āl* tree and expounded the eternal truth to the four *munis* (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra) who desired to hear the same.

39. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1955-56.

40. Gopinatha Rao, *Hindu Iconography* II, i, pl. LXXV, fig. 1.

41. *Manual of the Pudukottai State*, II, ii, p. 1078.

nanrūka nālvarkkum nānmaraiyiṇ uṭ poruḷai
anru ālin kīḷirundu, aṅgu, aṛam uraittāṇ
 (Tiruvācakam, 12—Tiruccāḷal: 16, lines 1-2)

and

anru āla niḷal kīḷ arumaṛaikaḷ tāṇaruḷi
 (Tiruvācakam, 12—Tiruppūvalli: 13, line 1)

It is to be noted here that many early temples of Śiva are named after the *ālam* tree, such a Ālaṅgāḍu, Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, Tiruvālaṅṭurai, Ālaṅḍi, and Tiruvāḷśvaram.

NATARAJA—ĀDAVALLAN

The dance of Śiva was an absorbing theme and is mentioned in the literature of the pre-*Tēvāram* and *Tēvāram* times including the *Tiruvācakam*. In fact the Tamils had concepts of particular types of dances for the different gods, as occasionally mentioned in the earlier works and more elaborately described in the *Śilupadikāram* (6:38-64), *Koḍukoṭṭi* of Śiva, *Pāṇḍaraṅgam* of Bhārati, *Alliyattokuti* and *Mallāḍal* of Viṣṇu *Tuḍi* and *Kuḍai* of Murugaṇ, *Kuḍakkūttu* of Kṛiṣṇa, *Pēḍi* of Kāmaṇ or Maṇmatha, *Marakkāl* of Durgā, *Pāvai* of Śeyyōḷ (Lakṣmī) and the *Kaḍaiyam* of Indrāṇi.

The dances of Śiva and their sublimation into the Ānanda tāṇḍava of Naṭeśa or Āḍavallāṇ, the Lord of dance, is perhaps the most important contribution of the Tamil country in the realm of concepts, art and iconography.^{41a} This climax, evidently, had not been reached in the time of the *Tēvāram* hymnists as will be clear from a close scrutiny of their references to Śiva's dance, particularly those referring to the poses or attributes suggesting iconography. Sambanda (576) mentions his dancing as *Puyāṅgar* (*Bhujāṅga trāsa*), and *Kāḷilaṇ-periya Kūttu* (124) or *Kālika-tāṇḍava* with the fire in one hand. In another decad (2881) he mentions the *Kuñcita* pose of the leg—*Kaḷal vaḷar kāl kuñcittu āḍiṇṇum*. His dancing to pacify Umā, who was jealous of his having received Gaṅgā on his head, to the recitation of *Sāmagāna*, is mentioned by Appar (4428), a theme elaborated in early sculpture, as for example in the Mūvarkoil, Koḍumbāḷūr and in Tiruvāḷśvaram. In another decad (4528) he describes Śiva's dance as follows: "the anklets of the legs jingling, with the fire in the hand that was extended, the tresses sweeping the directions,

41a. P. R. Srinivasan has dealt with this subject at some length in *Roop-Lekha*, Vol. XXVI and XXVII.

the Lord danceth". The famous verse of Appar (4941) beginning 'Kunitta puruvamum' and referring to his 'eḍutta porpādam' (*Kuñcita*), is too well known to be recited. Śiva's dancing the *vaṭṭu* with the heads of Viṣṇu and Brahmā is also mentioned by Appar (6885). It is Sundarar alone who gives in one *padikam* (8137) the attributes held in three of the four hands of Śiva, dancing in Siṟrambalam, as *ḍamaru*, bowl of fire, and snake. Maṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam*, repeats the same ideas.

The sculptures of the period amply corroborate the hymnists, again indicating their mutual chronological relation. The earliest sculpture of dancing Śiva was discovered recently as a small panel on top of one of the facade pilasters of the rock-cut cave temple in Śiyamaṅgalam excavated by Mahēndravarman I (c. 630 A.D.). It is a four-armed *bhujāṅgatrāsa* form holding aloft a serpent over the head, with another serpent rearing up by the side, as in the early Chāḷukyan example in Bādāmi and later ones in that area. The pose of the legs almost resembles that of the Ānanda tāṇḍava form, which is rather rare in early sculpture, both in the Tamil and Chāḷukya areas. On the northern wall of the second *tala* of the Dharmarāja ratha is a sculpture of Śiva dancing before Taṇḍu, who is imitating him. In the Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchī, the peculiar pose of *talasamsphōṭita*, which appears to have been a favourite of Rājasimha, is to be seen frequently. Two dancing forms of Śiva in the Pāṇḍya cave temples in Śevilippaṭṭi and Tirumalaipuram are of the four-armed *chatura* variety.

The only example of an eight-armed dancing Śiva is to be found in the Pāṇḍya cave temple III in Kuṇrakkudi, where the pose of the legs is again *chatura*. Such forms are also to be found in the later Pallava structural temples in Kāñchī *eg.* the Mātangēśvara. The concepts of the greatness of Śiva and Viṣṇu alike in being eight-armed are indicated by the Aṣṭabhujasvāmi temple with inscription recently excavated in Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, by the name Aṭṭabuyakaram for the Viṣṇu temple of Kāñchī in the *Prabandham* hymns and the mention by Tirumaṅgai in his *Tirunaraiyūr padikam* of Kō-Ceṅgaṇāṇ, as the one who built many temples for *eṇḍōl-Īsar* or Śiva (*Prabandham* 1505—*Periya Tirumoli*, vi, 6, v. 8-Tirunaraiyūr) and also *Kalittokai* (i). The restriction in the Tamil country to eight, and more often four, hands of dancing Śiva, is in marked contrast to what one finds in the contemporary Chāḷukyan and Rāshṭrakūṭa examples with as many as sixteen or eighteen hands.

It is only in the eighth century A.D. that we find the figure of the recumbent or crouching *Muyalakaṇ* of *gaṇa*-like form, called also *Apasmāra*, below the feet of the dancer. The example on the west of the facade of the Tirupparankunṇam cave temple (773 A.D.) of Śiva dancing in *chatura* over *Muyalakaṇ* watched by Umā and other celestials, with Viṣṇu and others playing on musical instruments, is the earliest of the kind in the Tamil country. An almost identical bronze, four-armed and dancing in *chatura* over recumbent *muyalakan* is known from a rare collection in the Bank of Italy assignable to the late 9th century A.D.⁴² Similar forms of about the same date as Tirupparankunṇam, particularly with *Muyalakaṇ*, occur in the Virūpāksha, where the pose is almost *ūrdhvajānu* and in Mallikārjuna where it is *chatura*, both temples of Chālukyan origin in Paṭṭadakkaḷ, dating between 733-46 A.D. In Aihoḷē (temple No. 9) we get both the eight-armed *ūrdhvajānu* and the four-armed *chatura* with *Muyalakaṇ* below. The much damaged dancing Śiva, over the facade of the Mogalrājapuram cave temple in Vijayawada of the same date and of Eastern Chālukya (Vēṅgichālukya) origin⁴³ is a peculiar type of eight-armed *ūrdhvajānu* with *Apasmāra* below, and similar in this and other respects to the Nallūr Naṭarāja bronze of the later Pallava period, or the Pallava-Chōḷa transition. The Kūram Naṭarāja of the late Pallava period is a four-armed *ūrdhvajānu* dancing on *Muyalakaṇ*. The fragmentary Pallava painting in Rājasimha's temple in Paṇamalai depicts the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*. The earliest representation of the typical Naṭarāja in the *ānanda tāṇḍava* form is to be found among the small and exquisite panels over the *garbhagṛiha* of the Tiruvāliśvaram temple in the Tirunelvēli District (c. 900-950 A.D.), probably of Pāṇḍya origin. Subsequent Naṭarāja forms in the typical pose, in stone and bronze *eg.* the Tiruvālaṅgāḍu specimens are too well known to be detailed here.

While the Tiruvāliśvaram Naṭarāja sets the earlier limit for the *ānanda tāṇḍava* specimen with *Muyalakaṇ*, it also seems to set the later limits for the Nāyaṇmārs. The mention of *Muyalakaṇ* by

42. Raghavan, V. *Indian Antiquities in Europe; Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1956, fig. 7.

43. This and other cave temples of Bezvada are obviously not of Viṣṇu-kunḍin or Pallava origin, as supposed by Dubreuil (*The Pallavas*, pp. 33, 35) or Longhurst (*Pallava Architecture I*, pp. 5, 24-27) and following them others. Other architectural features apart, the presence of *Muyalakaṇ* below dancing Śiva is itself sufficiently indicative of their date.

the earliest of the *Tēvāram* saints, in four contexts (Appar-*Tēvāram* 5130, 6590, 7139 and 7185) is of importance in this connection as it would point to his date, in the above sculptural context as round about the commencement of the 8th century A.D. He speaks of Śiva's subjugation of the ferocious *Muyalakan*, by trampling over him and his subsequent protection under his feet. It is Mānikka-vācakar alone that refers to the *Ananda tāṇḍava* as *ānanda-k-kūttu* in his *Tiruvācakam* (588: *Tiruvārttai*, 43, verse 3) indicating again his later date. He also mentions in his *Tiruvācakam*, (3: *Kīrtti-t-tiru akaval*, line 138) that Śiva danced for the sake of Patañjali.

SIVA LINGA

It has already been stated that the sanctums in the early Pallava cave temples dating upto 730 A.D. in *Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam* and dedicated to Śiva were devoid of a 'linga' of Pallava origin.⁴⁴ Even in the structural temples of Rājasimha with the Sōmāskanda relief on the hind wall of the sanctum, forming the primary object of worship, the installation of the 'lingas' was an afterthought, as the *in situ* evidences would indicate. For example, in the Kailāsanātha at Kāñchī, the *āvuḍaiyar* base is too large for the floor area of the sanctum, occupying, as it does, the entire space and requiring secondary adjustment of the floor stones, leaving no circumambulatory space. The top of the 'linga', too, hides as in many other cases, the Sōmāskanda panel behind. In another case a vertical groove has been cut on the northern wall of the sanctum to help in slipping down into position of the part of the *āvuḍaiyār* with the projecting spout. Even these 'lingas' in the Pallava structural temples, are of black stone, a material different from that of the construction, polished, and faceted, the facets being sixteen, reminiscent of the sixteen *kalas* of Sōma or Śiva. The cylindrical polished 'lingas' of the same material that came in later lack often the *sutra* markings. In the southern group of cave temples of Pāṇḍya or Muttaraiyar origin, the 'lingas' in the sanctum are cut *in situ* out of the same rock, as are sometimes the *nandis* in the *maṇḍapas* too, eg., Tirumayam and Tirumalāpuram. Except in three instances, viz., Tirupparaṅkuṇram, Pirāṇmalai, and Tirumalai (Rāmanāthapuram), there is no bas-relief on the hind wall of the

44. The only aberrant example is the cave temple at Mēlachēri of doubtful origin, that contains a rock-cut *linga*, as is to be found in the cave temples of the Pāṇḍyas and Muttaraiyars in the south, and dating after 700 A.D. See *Ancient India*, No. 14 (1958), p. 122.

sanctum in these temples and some others like the Umaiyaṇḍār cave temple in Tirupparaṅkunṇam are devoid of even the rock-cut 'liṅga'. In the lower rock-cut cave temple at Tiruchirāpaḷli with two shrines, one at either end of the *maṇḍapa*, the Viṣṇu sanctum at the eastern end contains a bas-relief sculpture of Viṣṇu, while the Śiva sanctum at the western end, has neither a Sōmāskanda panel nor a *liṅga*, either rock-cut or installed. This cave temple is non-Pallava, and is datable from other considerations to the middle of the 8th century A.D. In the Pāṇḍya cave temple at Tirupparaṅkunṇam excavated in 773 A.D., of almost similar design, the Viṣṇu sanctum contains a Viṣṇu relief and the Śiva sanctum a Sōmāskanda panel on its back wall and the *liṅga* in front is installed and not rock-cut. These mark therefore the transition from the worship of the iconic (Sōmāskanda) to the aniconic form (Śiva *liṅga*) round about 800 A.D., a reversal of what obtained earlier, and what has been persisting in the lower substrata of society throughout.

In the decads of Sambandar the ninth verse refers to the attempts of Viṣṇu and Brahmā to find out the feet or origin and the crest or end of Śiva's form, who is, in all these contexts, a huge pillar of fire or light (*aḷar piḷambu* or *taḷar piḷambu*) transcending all space as *śōḍi-liṅga* (6577)—*Jyōtir-liṅga*. Māṇikka-vācakar conveys the same idea in his *Tiruvācakam*, 459, 155, 175, 260, etc. This could be symbolised only by a tall pillar *tānu* (*sthānu*) see Appar (4627, 4636, 5243, 6577, 6584) and Sambandar (20, 138, 214, 675, and 1420 and *Taṇiyaṇ* 7695). In other places, the symbolic representation is called *Tāparam* (*sthāvara*) meaning both a shrine, and a fixed symbol or representation, a hold-fast (*paṇṇukkoḷu*) synonymous with the *kandu* or *tari* or *kambam* described earlier, to which one's mind is to be tethered. It would, therefore, be more logical to assume that the early 'liṅgas' of the temples in the Tamil country were only the reintroduction of the earlier *kandu* in a new form, totally devoid of phallic or fertility associations ascribed by some. Owing perhaps to the puritanic views and the strong *bhakti* movements of the *Nāyaṇmārs* of the period the concept of the *liṅga*, as well as its form, was purely a symbol of a cosmic pillar of fire and light. As such it was uninfluenced by the fertility and phallic ideas as elsewhere for which we have evidences from the recent excavations in Nāgārjunakoṇḍa of the Ikshvāku period, 3-5th centuries A.D. and the early Chāḷukya sculptures, which too reveal a continuity of such concepts in the numerous erotic sculptures and representations of Śiva with the

ūrdhva mēdhra, in one case double. That the contemporary revivalistic movements prevented such ideas spreading into the Tamil country will be clear, when one sees how this cult from the Chālukya country did travel in other directions eastward to Kalinga and north and westward to Central India and Gujarat, reaching its climax in the mediaeval period in Kōnārak and Khajuraho to name the most outstanding. Significantly enough such *mithuna* or *maithuna* sculptures or such representations of Śiva or the gods are singularly absent in the temples of the Tamil area till the Vijayanagara times, after which, when the entire south came under their rule, one sees stray examples here and there in the *gōpuras* or the pillars of the *maṇḍapas*, and more often in the wooden temple cars.

The other aniconic representation of Śiva was the ant-hill and he is referred to as *purriḍam koṇḍār*, the *prithviliṅga*, as in Kāñchī, Tiruvārūr, and Tiruvoṟṟiyūr. The earliest references to the practice of representing Śiva by a mound of heaped-up earth are in the contexts where the three *Nāyaṇmārs* refer to Chaṇḍēśa and his story. Appar (4627 and 4636) says that Chaṇḍēśa made a form of his god, the *tāparam*, by heaping up sand under the *Ātti* tree (another species of *Ficus* to which *Al* belongs). Sambandar (670) says that Chaṇḍēśa made the *liṅgam* with sand, and Sundarar (7382, 7786) also states that the '*liṅga*' was made of sand or white sand (*Kōla veṇ maṇal*). This is again stressed by the question 'what if the earth itself becomes the *Kamba*—' (*vāṇam tuḷangil eṇ? maṇ Kambamākil eṇ?* — Appar, 5215). Even in a reference by Appar to *mānasika* or mental worship of Śiva (*Tēvāram*, 4897) the body is to be made the temple and the inner mind the *liṅga* or symbol of Śiva.

*kāyamē kōyilāka, kaḍimaṇam aḍimaiyāka,
vāymaiyē tūymaiyāka, maṇamaṇi iliṅgamāka,
nēyamē neyyum pālā niraṇiya nīr amaiya
āṭṭi-p-pūsaṇai iṣaṇārkkku-p-pōṟṟavi-k-kāṭṭiṇōmē*

The concept of *Tāparam* is also indicated by Sundarar (7893) in the context of his reference to the worship of Śiva by Agastya — "*Sandi mūnriḷum tāparam nīṟutti, śakaḷi śeydu iraiṇṇiya Agat-tiyar tamakku*". That Śiva appeared in a '*liṅga*' is echoed by Appar (6173). That a *liṅga purāṇa* was known in Appar's time is clear from his reference to Śiva (6173) as *Liṅga-purāṇattu-uḷḷāṇ*, of which there is another reference in the *Prabandhaṣ* —

(Nammālvār 3334—*Tiruvāymoli*, *Nammālvār*, 4: 10, 5) as “*ilīngattu-iṭṭa-purāṇīrum*”.

It is these contemporary concepts that underlie the two earliest representations of Śiva as emerging from the ‘*liṅga*’, on the wall of the shrine of the Kailāsanātha, Kāñchī (730 A.D.) and on the wall of the rock-cut *maṇḍapa* of the Śiva cave temple in Tirumayam in the Pāṇḍya country, where it is a regular pillar extending from floor to ceiling, shown as if it would extend even beyond. This *Liṅga-purāṇa-dēvar*, as he is more correctly called in the Tamil descriptions, or *Aṇṇāmalaiyār* of later nomenclature, becomes a regular feature of the Śiva temples dating from 900-1000 A.D., occupying the *dēvakōshṭha* on the hind wall of the *vimāna* replacing the earlier Vishṇu, Harihara or Ardhanārī forms. In this indigenous concept of gods residing in pillars (*kandu*), or emerging out of them, that was prevalent from remoter times in the Tamil country, the emergence of Śiva, in the context of the *Liṅgapurāṇa* story, may suggest the Śaivite parallel to the story of Vishṇu emerging as Narasimha from the pillar. From what has been stated it would be clear, that the solitary example of the Guḍimallam *liṅga*, on the northern borders of the Tamil country, could not be as old as the 2nd-1st centuries B.C. as held by some, since for one thing, stone *liṅgas* did not exist in South India at that time. It could represent only the southward extension of the phallic and fertility cults noticed in the Andhra and Chālukya areas which ended on the borders of the Tamil country. This stray example is in an apsidal stone temple of about the eleventh century A.D. and there are no other associated antiquities to show such a very early date as the centuries B.C. Here the two-armed figure said to represent Śiva stands on the head of a crouching *gaṇa*, and this concept, occurs for the first time in the figure of a four-armed Śiva standing on the crouching *gaṇa* on the southern wall niche of the *vimāna* in the Virūpāksha temple at Paṭṭadakkaḷ. The supposed resemblance of the Guḍimallam *liṅga* figure to a Sāñchi Yaksha can at best be only accidental and not conclusive of its date.

Reference has already been made to the supposed contemporaneity of Appar with Mahēndravarmān. It is based on the version of Śēkkiḷār who wrote some four hundred years later. According to him, after his conversion from Jainism to Śaivism by Appar, the Pallava or Kāḍava king demolished a number of Jain institutions ‘*Paḷḷis* and *pāḷis*’ in Pāṭaliputra (modern Cudda-

lore), and with the materials thus obtained, constructed the *Kuṇadara-vīccuram* in Tiruvadigai (*Periyapurāṇam*—*Tirunāvukkaraṣu Nāyaṇār Purāṇm*, vv. 145-46). The name Guṇadhara has been equated with Guṇabhara, which was one of the titles of Mahēndra-varman I, and some of the subsequent editions have even corrected the text accordingly. This rather arbitrary identification apart, based on what we know from architectural history of the South Indian temples, there could not have been a stone temple (*paḷḷi*) or stone-built monastery (*pāḷi*) in Pāṭaliputra in the time of Mahēndra I, but only brick and timber structures. Only a stone structure, when dismantled, can yield material for re-building elsewhere and not a brick and timber structure, the dismantling of which will yield only useless debris. Further this does not appear to be supported by any internal evidence in the *Tēvāram* itself. Mahēndravarman's capital, Kāñchī was equally a home of the Buddhists and Jains, and he does not seem to have carried on this crusade in his own capital as a zealous Śaivite convert.

The Tiruchirāpaḷḷi cave-temple inscription of Mahēndravarman I, has also been quoted in support of a part of this story, viz., his conversion to Śaivism from Jainism or his return to the proper faith from his 'hostile conduct', which is taken to be connoted by the words '*vipaksha vṛitti*' in the inscription. And on this tenuous thesis the cave temple with its painting in *Śittanṇavāśal* was also attributed to him. As such the *Śittanṇavāśal* cave temple has been stated to be the earliest cave temple that he excavated when he was a Jaina, even in the face of his own unambiguous statement which he has made in his Maṇḍagappaṭṭu cave temple inscription. The very wording of this inscription would show that it was composed in a mood of exultation resulting from a first achievement which was the creation of a cave temple in stone, a permanent and imperishable material, without dependence on the conventional and perishable materials. Had he excavated the *Śittanṇavāśal* cave temple earlier, the inscription must have been properly there and it would have been meaningless in Maṇḍagappaṭṭu. Further we have to remember that *Śittanṇavāśal* in the contemporary Pāṇḍya domain, was outside the Pallava borders, which in Mahēndra's time reached only up to the Kāvērī with Tiruchirāpaḷḷi on its south bank, and one cannot expect an innovator like Mahēndra to go out of his own domains and create a cave temple and thereafter make another in his own territory and exult over the latter as a unique achievement. It should be remembered in this connection that no inscription

definitely attributable to Mahēndra or his successors is to be found south of Tiruchirāpaḷli till the time of Nandi II. In fact after Mahēndra's Tiruchirāpaḷli inscription and before Nandivarman II, no Pallava inscription has been found in the Chōḷa country which was in the hands of the Muttaraiyars and Pāṇḍyas. An architectural study of Mahēndra's cave temples would show that the Tiruchirāpaḷli example was one of the latest of the series of his cave temples, with Maṇḍagappaṭṭu starting the list.

Again in the context of our definite knowledge, that the earlier Pallava cave temple, namely those of Mahēndra and Māmalla, did not contain a *liṅga*, the usual interpretation given to the term in his Tiruchirāpaḷli inscription will require reconsideration. The inscription which is in two parts on either side of the Gaṅgādhara panel is numbered as two different inscriptions Nos. 33 and 34 by the Epigraphist, though they reveal a continuity of purport and, No. 34 will appear to be the earlier and 33 the later part of a single inscription. The words *liṅgēna liṅginī jñānam*' need not as Hultzsck and scholars following him have assumed, have a reference to the *liṅga* in a Śiva temple as the term is ordinarily understood. Taken with the equivalent 'Harasya tanu' and 'tanu' elsewhere in the inscription, it may connote a body or form, referring to the cave temple itself, which is amply made clear by the term 'śilāmayam tanu'. Even Hultzsck, the editor of the inscription has been aware of the inadequacy of his translation, and the apparent contradiction.⁴⁵

In this connection it, may be noted that the name Guṇabhara occurs in the *Prabandham* (2474; *Iyarpā, Tiruvandādi* 4:93) where Tirumaḷisai Āḷvār addresses the Lord as 'Kōṇē-kuṇapparaṇē' giving him a royal attribute as 'Kōṇ' and describing him as the repository of all virtues (*guṇas*). The date of this Āḷvar is believed to be later than Mahēndra, and as c. 850 A.D.⁴⁶ when no contemporary

45. *South Indian Inscriptions*, I, p. 29. In the note below he says that 'the whole verse is a *double entendre* and it contains allusions to Indian logic (*tarka śāstra*) in which *liṅgin* means the subject of a proposition, *liṅga* the predicate, and *vipakṣa* an instance on the opposite side'. This inscription has been noticed more fully in a forthcoming publication of mine, shortly to be published.

46. Vaiyapuri Pillai, *History of Tamil Language and Literature*, Madras 1956), pp. 120-21. If the tradition of his meeting the three Āḷvārs is any indication, his date may be in the later part of the 7th century A.D.

king had the title *gunabhara*. The term *Guṇadhara-Īśvaram* likewise must have been after one of Śiva's names—*Guṇadhara* the bearer of all *guṇas* (perhaps the *triguṇas*), and need not necessarily reflect the name of any contemporary king. But two obviously Pallava constructions, viz., Mahēndrappaḷḷi and Pallavaniccuram were noticed by the Nāyanmārs and sung by them because they were of the conventional type of brick and timber, and not the stone excavations or constructions as many others not noticed by them were.

Architectural and antiquarian history does not take the date of the founding of Māmallapuram earlier than Narasimhavarman Māmalla (630-660 A.D.). Bhūtattālvār who is reputed to be a native of Kaṇḍamallai, another name of the same place given to it in the *prabandhams* of the later Ālvārs, refers to the place as 'Māmallai'. This would clearly denote the origin of the place name as after Māmalla and no earlier name has been known for this place. The verse has a list of other sacred places also of which Tañjai is one (*Prabandham* 2251; *Iyarpa Tiruvandādi* 2:70, Bhūtattālvār). The earliest reference to Tañjai is perhaps in the short inscription in the natural cavern on the Tiruchirāpaḷḷi rock reading '*Tamcha haraka*' attributed to Mahēndravarman I and believed, perhaps rightly so, to refer to Tañjai, the modern Tanjore.⁴⁷ It rose to importance in the time of the Muttaraiyars who became powerful after Māmalla's time when the Pallavas lost hold of the Chōḷa country on the banks of the Kāvērī, and Vijayālaya Chōḷa founded his capital there, after defeating the Muttaraiyars. It is not mentioned in the earlier *Saṅgam* or post-*Saṅgam* classics. These would indicate a date in the second half of the 7th century A.D. for Bhūtattālvār.

That the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* movements could not have started earlier than the middle of the seventh century A.D. seems to be indicated also by another independent evidence. Yuan Chwang who visited South India in 642 A.D. and wrote about Kāñchī, has not noticed the movement. It cannot be said that he was unaware of contemporary religious trends for he notices the worshippers of the Dēva (Śiva) in Maharashtra who 'covered themselves with ashes' and in speaking of South India he expresses regret that his own creed of Buddhism was on the wane and

47. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy, 1937-38*, no. 135, also part II, para 3.

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repeatedly remarks that it had yielded to Digambara Jainism—mark, not to Śaivism as in Maharashtra. This would again place the *Tēvāram*, and the *Prabandham* likewise, after the first half of the seventh century A.D. which is borne out by the sculptural and iconographic evidences discussed above.

While only the most important aspects of concepts and god-heads could be taken up for study here, enough material remains for a similar study of the other forms of the major gods, and minor forms of god-heads like Indra, Dikpalas etc. A complete study of all the forms, will therefore be desirable in the present context of material evidence that has accumulated. The object of the present study would be achieved, if it has stimulated such an all-sided enquiry, from the literary, archaeological, architectural and sculptural stand-points.

Illustrations:

Plates I, II-B, III, IV V-A, VII, VIII, IX & X.

—*Courtesy Department of Archaeology, Government of India.*

Plates II-A, V-B & C, VI.

—*Courtesy Madras Government Museum, Madras.*

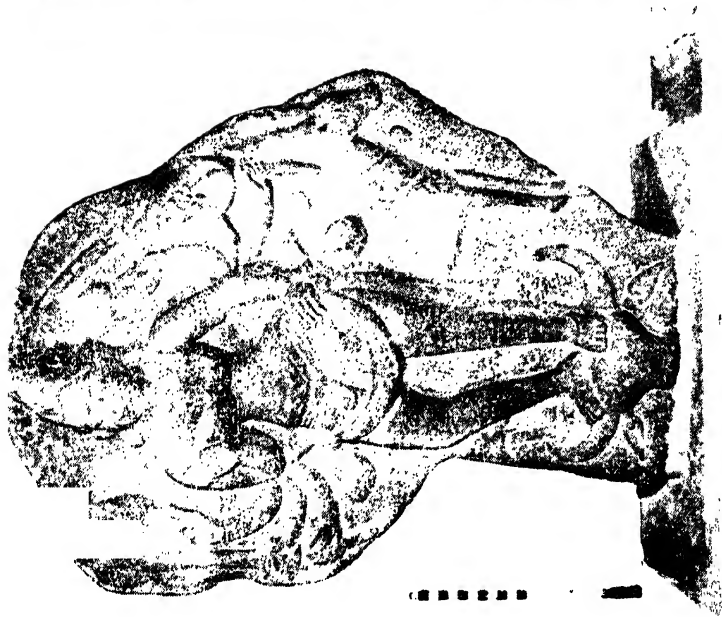


Krishna, Nappiṇṇai and Balarāma, Gōvardhana scene, Mahābalipuram.
See page 17.



Harihara, Ādivarāha cave temple,
Mahābalipuram. See page 18.

PLATE II



A. Durgā with deer mount (Tanjore), Madras Museum.
See page 23.



B. Durgā with lion mount, Panamalai. See page 28.



Durgā, Varāha cave temple, Mahābalipuram. See page 29.



Durgā, Ādivarāha cave temple, Mahābalipuram. See page 29.

PLATE IV



Durgā. Singavaram. See page 29.



Durgā, Draupadi ratha. Mahābalipuram. See page 28.

PLATE V



A. Ardhanāri (four-armed), Draupadī ratha,
Mahābalipuram. See page 31.

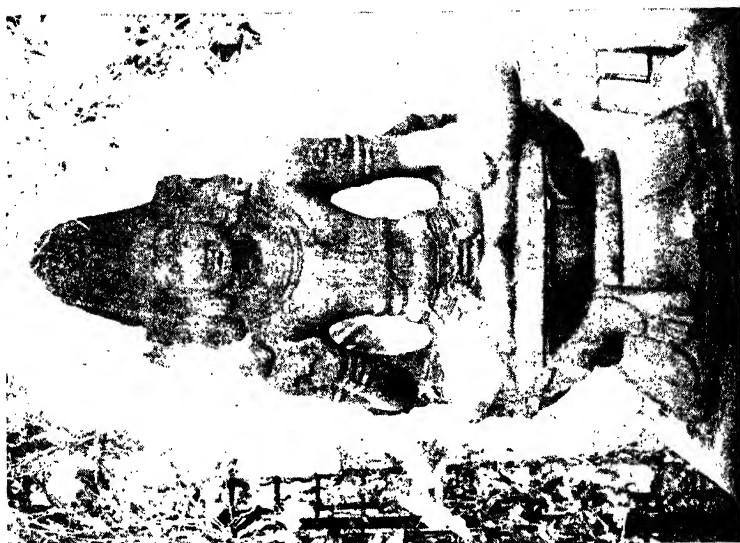


B. Ardhanāri (seated) Kaṇḍiyūr.
See page 31.



C. Ardhanāri, Koṭumbālūr
See page 31.

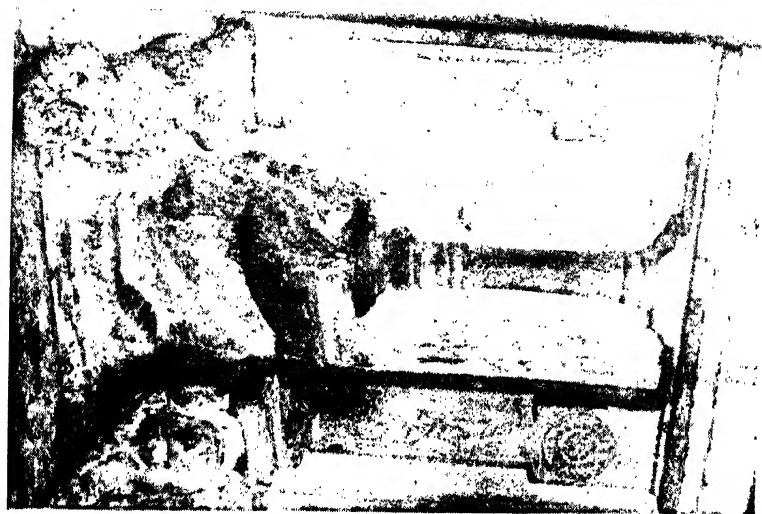
PLATE VI



Brahma (without beard), Kaṇḍiyūr. See page 49.



Brahma (bearded), Kaṇḍiyūr. See page 49.



A

Subrahmanya's banners. (A) Peacock; (B) Cock, Lājankōvil, Ānamalai (Madurai). See page 44.



B

PLATE VIII



Dancing Śiva, Śiyamaṅgalam. See page 59.



Subrahmanya, Tirumalai (Ramanāthapuram). See page 45.



Natésa. Tiruvälisvaram. See page 60.



Dancing śiva. Cave temple. Trupparankuṅṅam.
See page 60.

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